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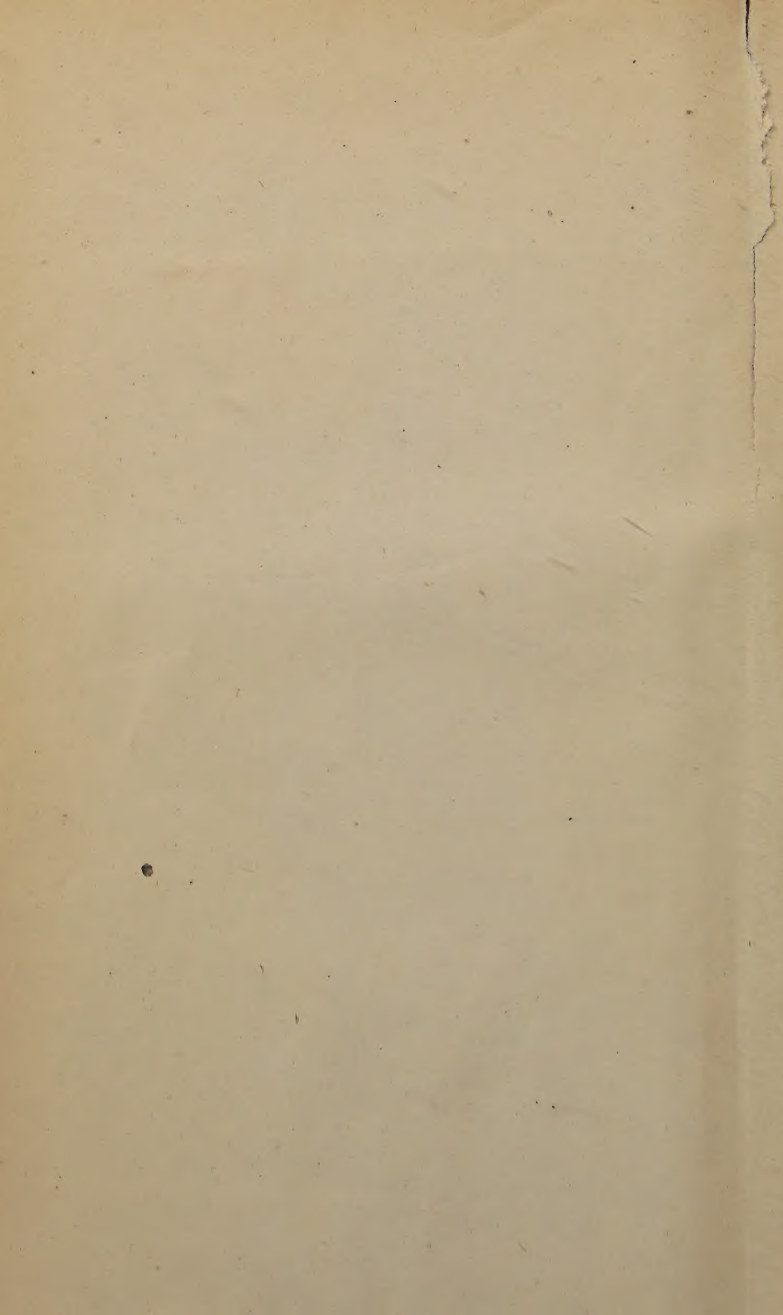
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THE

BETTER LAND;

OR,

THE BELIEVER'S JOURNEY

AND

FUTURE HOME.

BY

AUGUSTUS C. THOMPSON,

PASTOR OF THE ELIOT CHURCH, ROXBURY, MASS.

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Letter.

ROXBURY, JUNE 28, 1854.

REV. A. C THOMPSON :

Dear Sir,—

In view of your contemplated absence from us,— your voyage to a distant land,— and your travels and labors abroad, in company with our friend and fellow church-member, Rev. Dr. Anderson,— we take the liberty to request that you will furnish for publication thoughts and illustrations which we have heard from you, relating to Heaven and Heavenly-mindedness.

We desire to preserve and peruse them as a lasting remembrance of our beloved Pastor and friend. It is our belief, also, that such a volume will be read and prized by many others.

With sincere wishes for your health and happiness,

We are, most truly,

Your friends,

SAMUEL H. WALLEY,

ALVAH KITTREDGE,

HENRY HILL,

WM. W. DAVENPORT,

ABNER KINGMAN,

BENJ. PERKINS.

THE
BETTER LAND.

CHAPTER I.

THE PILGRIMAGE.

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, (immortal diet!)
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage,
— And thus I take my pilgrimage.

Over the silver mountains,
Where spring the nectar fountains,
There will I kiss
The bowl of bliss,
And drink mine everlasting fill,
Upon every milken hill;
My soul will be a-dry before,
But after that will thirst no more.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

A VOYAGE to a distant land," — such is the life of every believer, and a sanctified association of ideas naturally suggests "thoughts on heaven." "They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country, that is, a heavenly. Not

having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, they are persuaded of them, and embrace them, and confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, — that they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly.”

It is too late in the history of a race groping in darkness, to embark in an attempt to find the garden that was planted eastward in Eden. In former times there was, to be sure, no geographical problem which awakened so much interest as that ancient locality. No other has given rise to such extravagant opinions. Some of the allegorizing fathers believed there never was, actually, any Paradise; that it existed only in metaphor. Others, allowing it a local reality, placed it in the third heaven, in the moon, in the air, under the earth, where the Caspian Sea now is, and under the equator. Classical nations pictured their traditional Paradise, the Garden of Hesperides, as an island, or islands, somewhere in the ocean. There have been those who supposed that the primitive abode of man was in Ceylon, in Tartary, in Sweden, on the Danube, in Ethiopia, or among the Mountains of the Moon in Africa. There are, indeed, other and comparatively probable theories; but it must be confessed impossible to identify the precise spot

of the present globe where our first parents were originally placed. The sooner men give up searching for a terrestrial Eden, and direct their inquiries after the Paradise of God, the better.

“And Joshua sent men, saying, Go up and view the country.” “And now we are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you : come thou with us, and we will do thee good.” It appears from the great Guide-book that not much is needed for this life alone — merely something for travelling expenses ; that investments are not to be made here by the way ; but that bills of exchange on a capital the other side are wanting. We are enjoined to lay up treasures there, and we find that, with a munificence surpassing description, the best of securities are proffered, and that we are supplied with promissory notes “exceeding great and precious.”

“Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country,” “because the king’s business requireth haste.” On our way to the Better Land, to the celestial city, we would not stop at every poor, paltry village this side, and be greatly taken with the miserable shows that present themselves. We would be unencumbered, for he that goes lightest goes fleetest. It was happy in the Romans to call

baggage *impedimenta*. “Wherefore, laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, let us run with patience the race set before us.”

In leaving the literal home, and in prosecuting a literal journey, travellers should cherish a prayerful desire that all they meet with may be sanctified. There is a religious use to be made of the eyes and ears, and all the incidents of an excursion. The very conveniences and inconveniences of travelling, the impudence and imposition encountered, bring hallowed hints to a devout mind, touching the Better Land. There will be no noise, no rudeness, no fatigue there; no want of suitable accommodations; no perilous locomotion, nor one jarring vehicle in all that world; no deceptive, petulant, profane guides; angels never ask for fees. In our Father's house are many mansions, but no confined, ill-ventilated, infectious rooms. Bolts are not required; bills are not presented; police are not needed in the New Jerusalem.

Even a high enjoyment of the objects, scenes and events of earth, if devoutly managed, is no part of worldliness; it is using the world as not abusing it; it belongs to conversation in heaven. Appropriate prayerful use of what passes before us

will only foster a keener relish for things unseen. Cultivating such a habit, we shall be laying up treasures in heaven. We would, then, have our senses all on the alert; we would drink in the living colors that float at daybreak, at noontide, and in the softened hour of fading day. We would stamp on our memory an image of the enchanting, glorious garniture of sky, rivers, lakes, sea, mountains and valleys, and would let praise and prayer to God hallow all. Beholding thus with open face as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

“And their brethren said unto them, What say ye? And they said, Arise, for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very good.” In declaring plainly that we seek a better country, we do not consider ourselves to be on a voyage of discovery. Our knowledge of the other world is derived from sources very different from those which carried hints concerning the existence of this western continent to the shores of Europe, — floating trees and plants, borne by the gulf-stream from the tropics. He, who alone came down from heaven, who is himself the way, the truth and the life, has declared, “If it were not so, I would have told you: I will come again and receive you unto myself, that

where I am, there ye may be also." In the midst of our toiling and rowing, Jesus cometh to us, about the fourth watch of the night, walking upon the sea ; and presently the shipmen deem that they draw near to some country. " And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep ; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed ; the night is far spent, the day is at hand."

" Our life is like the hurrying on the eve
Before we start on some long journey bound,
When fit preparing to the last we leave,
Then run to every room the dwelling round,
And sigh that nothing needed can be found ;
Yet go we must, and soon as day shall break ;
We snatch an hour's repose, when loud the sound
For our departure calls ; we rise and take
A quick and sad farewell, and go ere well awake."

CHAPTER II.

CLUSTERS OF ESHCOL.

In some hour of solemn jubilee,
The massy gates of Paradise are thrown
Wide open, and forth come, in fragments wild,
Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
And odors snatched from beds of amaranth,
And they that from the crystal river of life
Sprung up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales!
The favored good man in his lonely walk
Perceives them, and his silent spirit drinks
Strange bliss, which he shall recognize in heaven.

COLERIDGE.

A traveller, after a long journey, when he is weary and faint, and sits down, if he sees the town before him, it puts life into him, and he plucks up his feet, and resolves not to be weary till he be at his journey's end. O, look at the crown and white robe set before you, and faint if you can: get on the top of Mount Nebo,—look on the land of promise,—those good things set before you; taste the grapes of Canaan before you come to Canaan.

NALTON.

ALL superior minds are enterprising. They are marked by an activity which conceives and attempts greater things than the surrounding multitude. Their spheres of effort may be various, their powers unlike, their measures of success very diverse, yet

all minds which impress themselves upon others, and accomplish much for good or evil, are characterized by a forth-putting energy and courage. Little souls are timorous. They venture nothing; they do not aspire; they do not grow; for they shrink within themselves, listless and inactive.

Among those sent from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land of promise, were Caleb and Joshua, men of true enterprise, and their subsequent career showed them possessed of a persevering and sanctified energy. They never lost the impressions of their visit to the goodly land; the beauty of its prospects, and the security of the covenant of Jehovah's pledge of possession to them. "And they came unto the brook Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bore it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates and of the figs: and they said, We came unto the land, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." Are not we in the wilderness? is not Canaan before us? are not clusters of Eshcol presented to us? Shall we not taste of the same, and quicken our steps toward the Better Land?

Older and discerning Christians remark an unusual spirit of worldliness in the churches. It is

fear'd by judicious fathers and mothers in Israel, as well as by younger Calebs and Joshuas, that there are tokens of defection ; evidences of a desire to return to Egypt ; and that idolatry, in the form of covetousness, is stealing upon the hearts of the people of God. Well may they tremble for the sacramental host when they find an Aaron sanctioning the dance around some golden calf, and witness such ingratitude for deliverance, such readiness in yielding to the seductions of neighboring idolaters ; when they hear, too, such complaints of the weariness of the way, and the absence of Egyptian luxuries ; and behold such reluctance to go forward at God's command, and take possession of the promised land. Strange it is, and deplorable, that fugitives, under the sanction of God's own right arm, should sigh for a return to bondage and darkness !

The worldly spirit deals with things present. It is not far-reaching or far-sighted, but its range is bounded by the horizon of time. It has no wings ; it is of the earth, earthy. Whence comes the manna ? why gushes water from the rock ? whither guides the pillar of cloud and of fire ? — are questions it never asks. It knows not how to soar ; how to anticipate and trust ; how to see him who is invisible, and to repose under the shadow of his

wings, unmindful of the wilderness, and unalarmed by foes. But the heavenly-minded man walks by faith, — that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And, among the great verities which hold possession of his soul, no one has a firmer lodgment than that of the saints' everlasting rest. All the circumstances of his present journey, all his remembrances, point to a Better Land, that is, a heavenly. But most of all, the word of the Lord hath settled it. Did he not swear unto Abraham, "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession?" In the horror of great darkness that fell upon him, did not a smoking furnace and a burning lamp pass between the cloven pieces, to ratify the covenant?

"Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying, in David, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God." O, yes, in every assurance of the covenant-keeping Jehovah; in every believing aspiration of patriarchs and prophets; in every mystery and miracle from Messiah's incarnation to his ascension; in every teaching and motion of the Holy

Spirit, in his word and in the souls of the sanctified on earth, there is a pledge of Canaan to come. The spiritually-minded know this. They know that if they are Christ's then are they Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Heaven is to them no mere poetic sentiment; no speculative conjecture, or philosophical deduction; no traditional record; but an assured certainty. Though not having received the promises, they have seen them afar off. The heavenly-minded man has heavenly things in mind. The objects and occupations of the world above are not mere matters of record in the Bible, themes suggested as his eye lights upon Baxter's Saint's Rest, — interesting subjects upon which he once heard a lecture, — items of pantology, about which he has no doubt, and as little thought; they fill his mind, — they are present to his eye; they are home acquaintances. Fully persuaded of their existence, and expecting presently and personally to enjoy them, he often turns to the directory of Canaan, which inspiration supplies. He passes round by the ascent of Ahrabbim, he goes up from Kadesh-barnea, he traverses the valley of Eshcol and Jordan, he surveys Carmel and Hermon, and that goodly mountain, Lebanon; he wanders over the vine-clad

hills, and among the palm-groves and olive orchards, till he seems naturalized and domesticated there.

Yet, our conceptions of heaven are modified by our temperament, condition and habits. Robert Hall, a sufferer from the first to the last hour of his pilgrimage, remarked, "My chief conception of heaven is rest." "Mine," replied the amiable Wilberforce, "mine is love, — love to God, and love to every bright and happy inhabitant of that glorious place." Both were right, and both have also found, what they likewise knew on earth, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the chief charm and glory of that world. No believer can meditate intelligently, for any length of time, upon heavenly objects, without having his thoughts drawn to the person of the King of kings, and Lord of lords. He it was who came down from heaven. He it is whom God "raised from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." He, the way, the truth and the life, — He,

the Alpha and Omega of all gracious manifestations, and all sanctified aspirations, — the bond, the harmonizer of eternity and time, of the infinite and the finite, of the divine and the human, — he, in every believer the hope of glory, must, to all saints, seem the chiefest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely. “Blessed,” do they cry, “blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

“I in them, and they in me”! O, the mystery of that mutual indwelling! “I will dwell in them.” O, the condescension of Immanuel, to convert a child of the dust into a temple for himself! to come and sojourn, ay, be a tent companion with him! “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” And when Christ comes he always brings heaven with him. Whoever sups with him feeds upon hidden manna, the true bread which cometh down from heaven. But, to commune thus with Christ, to call him elder brother, to find he is not ashamed to call us brethren, is not that to be heavenly-minded? It is heaven in the heart; it is glory begun; it is salvation antici-

pated. "Whom, having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory ; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

Others are "of the world ;" they think of the world, speak of the world, live for the world ; whose minds the god of this world hath blinded. True, in the midst of this intense worldliness, there may be abundant discourse, poetic or speculative, about heaven, which, at best, has only an æsthetic influence, and has nothing to do with sanctification. But that occupation with celestial themes, which the Holy Spirit fosters, has a mighty assimilating power. By it the soul is elevated and ennobled. Its field and its powers of vision are enlarged, and the relative proportions and value of things seen and unseen are more clearly appreciated, and practically felt.

Worldly-minded men are like common pendulums, that feel every disturbing influence ; the heavenly-minded man is like that of Foucault ; though connected with the earth, and moving with it, still it keeps faithfully and majestically to its own independent plane of vibration, while surrounding objects rotate continually. Yea, more :

“His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
Bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.”

Men are not, however, thus unfitted for common occupations, and are rendered anything but indifferent to the smaller duties and mercies of life. Angels, probably, minister with no less alacrity to them who are the humblest heirs of salvation, than to Him who is their Lord and ours. The command of God dignifies any service; it equalizes all obligations. Growth in the grace now under consideration only infuses a more genial and holy warmth into the Christian's ordinary duties, and renders him more devoutly sensitive to the least as well as the greatest of all God's benefits. The spiritually-minded man is no gymnosophist, gazing vacantly at the heavens; he is a Copernicus, installing the sun as centre of the system, and reducing our earth to its proper subordination. No one who wisely contemplates the starry firmament which God has ordained will make it revolve round the insignificant planet we occupy; nor can any one who has surveyed the land flowing with milk and honey any longer so overvalue the wilderness through which he journeys. More just estimates will be thus formed, and higher aspirations awakened. Anaxagoras was so enamored with astronomical studies that

he thought himself born to contemplate the heavens ; and, when reproved for not seeking the public honors and offices of his country, he replied, “ My first care is for my country.” So the heavenly-minded believer regards himself as having less to do with earth than with the skies. Present distinctions, possessions and amusements, cannot fill his eye. He is only a stranger here. He brought nothing into the world, he can carry nothing out. His citizenship, his treasures, his heart, are in heaven, and his hope is to be there himself, personally, wholly and forever. When the rude northern people had once drank of the sweet wines of Italy, they could not rest satisfied till they were themselves quartered in that pleasant land. So, when the true Israel of God have but tasted of the clusters of Eshcol, they are fired with new desires to go up and possess that land which the Lord hath promised them. A holy ardor is kindled. When, notwithstanding the report of Caleb and Joshua, the timid host were fain to return to the house of bondage, those assured champions “ spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then will he bring us into this land, and give it us ; a

land flowing with milk and honey. Only rebel ye not against the Lord." "But all the congregation bade stone them with stones." Of all then living only those two entered Canaan, — the carcasses of the rest falling in the wilderness ; for God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. Every true believer has a faith which works by love and impels to effort. In proportion as this heavenly temper takes possession of the soul, it urges to energetic, self-sacrificing enterprise. You may know the men who have become familiar with the land of promise by their humble yet earnest bearing ; by their disinterested readiness to do good unto all men as they have opportunity, but specially unto the household of faith ; by their lovely and noble combination of amiable and commanding qualities. Their whole walk is fragrant of Paradise. "All their garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia."

"When one that holds communion with the skies
Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings.
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied:
So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,

Has dropped her anchor and her canvas furled
In some fair haven of our western world,
'T were vain inquiry to what port she went,
The gale informs us, laden with the scent."

How does love glow towards their fellow-travelers, their future fellow-citizens in the Better Land! Is it the heavenly-minded who slight or slander those with whom they are to dwell under the same roof, with whom they are to serve and to sing for ever?

How do the heavenly-minded welcome death, desiring to depart! What foretastes do they often have, as they approach the confines of Canaan! Land-birds, of beautiful plumage, greeted Columbus days before his eye caught a glimpse of the New World. A more southern voyager found himself in the fresh waters of the Amazon before discovering the continent whence they came. So, at the close of life's voyage, do birds of Paradise come hitherward, careering on bright wings, and the river of life sends its refreshing current far out into the briny sea of this world. "The celestial city," said Payson, "is now full in my view. Its glories beam upon me,—its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart."

In observing the transit of Venus across the

sun's disc, Rittenhouse was so filled with rapture that he fainted. And, as the glories of the upper world, the unutterable splendor of the Sun of Righteousness, attract the eye of the beholder, is it strange he should be rapt and overwhelmed? "The kingdom of heaven is within you." Such holy anticipations turn earth into Paradise.

"Thoughts of heaven! they come when low
The summer evening breeze doth faintly blow;
When the mighty sea shines clear, unstirred
By the wavering tide or the dipping bird;
They come in the rush of the raging storm,
When the blackening waves rear their giant form,
When o'er the dark rocks curl the breakers white,
And the terrible lightnings rend the night;
When the noble ship hath vainly striven
With the tempest's might, — come thoughts of heaven.

They come where man doth not intrude,
In the untracked forest's solitude;
In the stillness of the gray rocks' height,
Where the lonely eagle takes its flight;
On peaks where lie the eternal snows;
In the sun-bright isle, mid its rich repose;
In the heathy glen; by the dark, clear lake,
When the fair swan sails from her silent brake,
Where nature reigns in her deepest rest,
Pure thoughts of heaven come unrepressed."

CHAPTER III.

WAYMARKS.

When once we close our eyes in death,
And flesh and spirit sever ;
When earth, and fatherland, and home,
With all their beauty, sink in gloom,
Say, will it be forever ?

Shall we in heaven no more review
Those scenes from which we sever ?
Or, will our recollection leap
O'er death's dark gulf, at times, to keep
With earth acquaintance ever ?

The child 's included in the man,
And part of him forever ; —
The Past still in the Future lives,
And basis to its being gives,
Not it, but of it ever."

For what is earth so valuable as for a memento of something better ? What use shall strangers and pilgrims make of it, save as a volume from which to get the alphabet of celestial science ; save as a rude wharf, from which they embark ; a tottering bridge, over which they pass to the Better Land ? For all who will see them, there are

waymarks along the road, pointing toward Canaan. God permits us to gaze on mountain and plain, river and waterfall, not to satisfy us, but to furnish occasion for praise, and to quicken our desires for more satisfying scenes. Each spot on earth made attractive to the Christian, every view that has impressed him, enter in among the fruitful seeds of things which are to grow throughout our immortality. Viewed in a spirit of adoring love to the great Creator and Redeemer, each new scene becomes a fresh element of spiritual expansion, to be carried with him as a memorial, the occasion of a new song to Him who is seated on the throne.

The mountains are remembrancers. In all directions they lift their dark or hoary heads, singly, or in groups, holding many a reservoir to feed the pure perennial springs, that like living hearts send forth the very life-blood of the land, and embosoming many a lake worthy to be called "The Smile of the Great Spirit." They look like sentinels which the Lord of hosts has set on duty; their deep gorges avenues to the palace of the Great King. When morning shines, what a wealth of glory is poured over their lofty ridges, and down their sides! When evening shadows settle over them, you may see the white clouds hovering around and below

their summits, as if in search of a quiet lodging-place ; just as you have seen doves nestle a little this way and that, ruffling their wings, and carefully adjusting themselves for a night's repose.

Solemn, majestic remembrancers ! ye call to mind Mount Moriah and Sinai, Carmel and Lebanon, Tabor and Calvary, and the fastnesses amidst which Waldenses and Covenanters sang praises to the God of their salvation. Most comfortable are the thoughts ye awaken. Ye lift our thoughts away from earth. We think how the everlasting arm is underneath the feeblest saint of the Most High : yea, that He who weigheth the mountains in scales is in covenant with his people. “ As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth, even forever.”

The soul of man needs a stronghold whose foundations are elsewhere than on this quaking planet. When these mountains shall be scattered, and these hills bow, we shall find that the Rock of Ages alone can serve for a hiding-place. “ I will say of the Lord — the Lord my righteousness — he is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer ; in him will I trust.”

In certain districts of Switzerland, where primitive simplicity still lingers, a peasant stations himself on the loftiest peak, and, as soon as the sun sets,

pours from his Alpine horn the notes of the Psalm, "Praise God the Lord!" The same notes are repeated from neighboring summits, and all within hearing, with uncovered head and bended knee, join in their evening worship. Every hill-top and mountain-peak that our eye rests upon has its herald, sounding forth a summons, — and at day-break, too, yea the livelong day, — "Praise ye the Lord!" "O, come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation!"

Yes, those towering summits are waymarks, carrying the mind of the pilgrim upward to his soul's everlasting Munition of rocks — to Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. No one less venerable than the Ancient of Days, less mighty than the Creator, less compassionate than the Lamb that was slain, less condescending and august than God manifest in the flesh, will suffice for our guilty, helpless souls. Praise, everlasting praise to Christ the rock of our salvation!

The plain too is suggestive. You may have traversed the wilderness of the West, and the Grand Prairie, stretching beyond it a thousand miles to the Rocky Mountains, impressive beyond anything of mountain or ocean scenery that you ever gazed upon before. Only the glorious firmament above surpasses

it. The vistas of boundless extent, often unbroken by a tree or other object; and then the same, varied by gentle undulations, rising at times almost insensibly into mountains; now an outcropping ledge of sandstone stretching for miles, a cyclopean wall; and now a water-course, marked by a belt of trees and luxuriant vines; the grass everywhere of the freshest green, and varied only by parks of lovely wild flowers thousands of acres in extent, perfuming the whole atmosphere as you pass. O, it is enchantment! It is a new world. It is as if you had been translated to another planet, where the Creator displays a peculiar type of his power and wisdom. Journeying alone day after day in that region, meeting scarcely a human being or habitation, you do not feel lonely. There is a solemnity which renders human intercourse well-nigh an annoyance. "The earth is the Lord's," but eminently that vast region, where man's bustling industry or even his sinful presence is hardly known. Uninterrupted sabbath reigns. It is a magnificent area which the hand of the Almighty has prepared for a broad camping-ground, a stupendous temple, where angels, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, might congregate, with ample space for all heavenly occupations. What

reverent mind, amid such scenes, would not ascend to heaven ?

Recalled to the half unpleasant reality that it is a part of our common earth, you find it difficult to break the illusion that this open country is under cultivation, — that it is the royal domain of some great emperor, — that these are his limitless parks, — that those sloping hill-sides and wide intervals between the wooded tracts are kept for regal amusement or display. You are expecting to see troops of laborers, and presently to come in sight of a crowded and wealthy metropolis on the plains. It seems as if the sun, for the last hour of his course, lingered on his way, loath to close his eye upon so glorious a scene.

But, “Thou makest darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forests do creep forth ;” there is no shelter, no sanctuary there ; and your heart, surcharged with thoughts of the eternity and boundless resources of Jehovah, dilates on the green fields, delectable groves, and river of life above, and the mild radiance thrown over the whole prompts the cry, “O, send out thy light and thy truth ; let them lead me ; let them bring me unto thy holy hill !”

There is no night there. So glorious is that

landscape God will never suffer it to be darkened. Saints never get bewildered or lost in glory. "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast go up thereon; it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there."

The cavern also has its lesson. The tourist enters one of the more extraordinary of those subterranean regions. He gropes from room to room, now stooping low through a narrow passage, now emerging into a vast hall with lofty arching roof. On all sides wreaths of crystal, ample folds of richest drapery, statues and columns; here a sounding-board, there an organ, and, beyond, the dim arches of an interminable cathedral. It would seem to be the old Labyrinth, or the Pantheon; it is Herculaeum; it is a mediæval cloister, an oriental temple. Reaching a point thousands of feet from the entrance, with a roof two hundred feet in thickness overhead, he sits down amidst the silent solemnities of the place, the darkness slightly relieved by a torch-light, and the strangely profound silence unbroken save by here and there a drop of water trickling from the cleavages of rocks above. Calcareous matter, in particles almost infinitely small, is thus deposited. Months, years pass away, and only a small accumulation has taken place; yet, thus it is,

by that slow drop, drop, drop, those numberless stalactites, crystalline sheets and pillars, have been formed. The thought occurs, so is it in the secret chambers of the soul; the dews of divine grace distil gently, and in those silent and once dreary recesses there come into being forms of heavenly grace and beauty — all the garniture of a temple on high. Earth is but a cavern; yet are the Lord's hidden ones in process of preparation for their use in the New Jerusalem, and they will be found unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Light is needed, not only to render excellence apparent, but to complete the full measure of its development. In the dark gorges of the Alps, where the direct rays of the sun never reach, there is among the Swiss a fearful amount of idiocy. Many of the inhabitants are dumb, or blind, or deaf, and not a few labor under all these calamities combined, while nearly all are misshapen in some part of their body. But amidst Mount Zion and the high hills of Heaven are no deep defiles, or caverns where light never penetrates. Pervading every spot equally, is an atmosphere perfectly attempered, and a light infinitely benign, under whose influence

the fullest and most harmonious developments will take place.

The waterfall has a voice for us. We find our way down circuitously to the base of Montmorenci. By leaping and climbing, we approach the very edge of the roaring sheet, and there stand entranced by the flood of moving beauty and grandeur. On come the waters, and over the cliffs, plunging and foaming, laughing in wildest glee, filling the air with scattered drops, which float and gleam like diamonds in the morning light. The sun seems to gaze with us in wonder at the scene. Look round upon the dark, frowning walls of rock, and lofty banks, fringed with evergreen trees, — silent sentinels, that keep watch over the stupendous chasm.

Gaze at the streaming rainbows, whose liquid colors seem to issue from the living fount of beauty itself. Cast your eye on the projecting bed of earth, which the rush of waters has spared, that its grass-plot of brilliant green may smile, the summer long, so gladsomely, in the face of Montmorenci, this queen of cascades. There she stands, in peerless beauty, with bridal robe and wreath, and heaven's own kiss, on that forehead changeless and serene.

It is a place for the soul to dilate, to soar on high, lost to what is visible in the vision of that

which is unseen, brighter and more lovely than those things which are seen.

“After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was, as it were, of a trumpet talking with me, which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was, to look upon, like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal. And the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

Yea, enthroned Redeemer, this waterfall is thine! this globe is thine: thine is this soul of mine, with all its powers, to all eternity! Be every thought, every desire, centred in thee, now and for evermore!

O, height of divine love! O, depth of Immanuel's fathomless love! O, mystery unspeakable of

the altar whereon the Lamb of God made expiation for sin, and whence the smoke of that all-satisfying sacrifice went up acceptably before the throne!

Going far to the north, we will visit the Saguenay. We are borne along a stream, broad, dark, and deep, in places even fathomless. Lofty mountains, rugged and precipitous, form its shores. No mortal, not even the Indian, has probably ever set foot upon them. It is midnight; and the moon has gone down behind a dark crest of the bleak, western barrier. We move onward, amid the awful solitude, till we approach one of the everlasting hills which has stepped down to the stream, and advanced its foot into the water. It is called "Eternity Point," — a rock, rising perpendicularly, with its majestic front of fifteen hundred feet, while the line finds no bottom to the quiet current at its base. It is a mountain that might be touched as we sail by. But God has touched the hills, and they smoke. "The Mount is altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace." Just below, and far down the stream, vast tracts are in a blaze. It is as if the whole region were instinct with volcanic forces, and just ready to burst forth in overwhelming terror. You

observe, as your eye looks down that gloomy vista, that those livid flames are beyond "Eternity Point."

Ah, traveller! whither are you bound? Nearing "Eternity Point," the raging fires below in full view, what think you of life, of death? The hour is coming when "the heaven shall depart as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island be moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Voyagers on the swift current of time, what is the prospect opening before us as we round Eternity Point? When our bark shall have shot by that solemn bourn, and dense darkness have veiled — impenetrably veiled — you and me from the eyes of those behind, where shall we be? Ponder it, ye who spend your years as a tale that is told, who are as a sleep; ye who, in this night of time, float listlessly along toward the last beacon between

this world and the next, ponder it. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

But while from the midst of that fire we seem to hear many a one, crying, "Have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame;" in one direction only is there light and peace,—it is in the blue heavens above. The stars, as they look down placidly upon us, speak of the Better Land. They remind us of them who "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city."

It was on these very stars that Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Jacob gazed; by their light they were guided in their journeyings and sojournings,

and their silent suggestions from on high awakened earnest and holy desires after another country. Blessed patriarchs! “Ye are not now come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest; but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

“There is a happy land,
Far, far away,
Where saints in glory stand,
Bright, bright as day.
Hark, how they sweetly sing, —
Worthy is our Saviour King;
Loud let his praises ring:
Praise, praise for aye!

Come to this happy land,
Come, come away!
Why will you doubting stand,
Why thus delay?

On, then, to glory on !
Be a crown and kingdom won ;
Then, bright above the sun,
We 'll reign for aye ! ”

We embark on another stream, — let it be the St. Lawrence, — near its head, and move downward with the mighty current of a river ample enough for the highway of nations, draining an area of half a million of square miles, and the outlet of more than half the fresh water of the globe. We sweep by now a solitary island, sitting swan-like on the flood, and now by a cluster of the same. Anon the river spreads into a broad lake, and then is compressed again between its rocky shores. We are nearing the rapids. The bosom of the river heaves and eddies as if leviathan had grown angry, and were causing it to boil like a pot. And now we are swept into the midst of perils of waters where all is wild confusion and foam, the rocks on either side threatening instant destruction to the vessel, which plunges and writhes as if the fatal collision had already taken place. The stoutest hold their breath, and glance alternately at the arrowy flood and at the wheel, where four sinewy steersmen put forth their strength, and the keen, steady eye of the chief pilot reassures the hearts of trembling passengers.

It is one of life's passages that we have thus made. Often is the soul in straits, where the current whirls and tosses, and there is a sharp rock on one side, and a sharp rock on the other, and it seems as if wreck were unavoidable. But "my Father is at the helm." With a high hand and an outstretched arm does he guide his children. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

On we go, and still on, day after day, along that broad mirror, of six hundred miles' length, that reduplicates from its clear surface populous city, and village, and smiling farm-house, trees and clouds, and the ever-varying forms of grandeur in the bold ranges that define its borders. But the river meets the sea, and is lost. And is its meaning lost? Shall its significancy as a symbol be unheeded? Who does not see in it time swallowed up in eternity? life with its depths and shallows, its eddies and rapids, its broad quiet bosom and its rushing narrows, its bright hues and dark vapors, its current urging still on to the great ocean?

A solemn thing this life-excursion, — once made forever ! It is something to move the soul's lowest depths to look out on the boundless expanse beyond, and feel the vast swells, and catch the solemn sounds of eternity ; and happy he, who, in sailing down the stream, has an eye to behold the sweet fields beyond, who maintains calmness amid the swelling of Jordan ; yea, whose peace God maketh like a river ! What believing pilgrim can keep his thoughts away from a better land, that is, an heavenly ? “ There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her ; she shall not be moved.”

“ Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities : thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down ; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams ; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.”

But you have reached the sea, that fearful expanse, the highway of the Almighty. “ His path is in the great deep ; his pavilion round about him are dark

waters and thick clouds of the sky." And as you have sailed day after day, and week after week, witnessing the wonders of God, when the awful anthem of the storm was the only music that greeted you ; when you were tossed about, a thing of utter helplessness ; when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on you ; then you opened the Apocalypse, and read with a delight not to be described . " I saw a new heaven and a new earth ; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea." You read again and again, with heightening appreciation of its meaning : " No more sea ; no more sea."

Your voyage is to the tropics. You visit the island toward which this country turns such a covetous eye. New forms of exuberant vegetation, the perennial verdure of foliage, the spontaneous profusion of fruits, the fragrance of orangeries and coffee plantations, the feathery bamboo and banana, and the stately classic palm, supply unlooked for types of beauty, enhanced by an atmosphere of singular serenity, and a sky of the softest blue. There, too, the sun shineth in his strength ; " there is nothing hid from the heat thereof ; he rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race . "

“Not, as in northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light.”

Evening comes on, and you not only behold familiar stars, but the brilliant constellations of the southern firmament look down upon you. Individual stars of eminent beauty, — Achener, Canopus, Maia Placida, the star of first magnitude nearest the south pole, and the two of similar rank in Centaur, — rise up to view. But chiefly are you delighted as the Southern Cross presents itself in all its mild yet impressive glory. You find special occasion for wonder and praise. You would fain walk to the house of God, in company with them that keep holy time ; but, alas ! where will you find such ? The Lord’s day is not known : the mummeries of superstition, baptized or unbaptized, are not the worship of God. All the abominations of slavery and the slave trade obtrude upon your eye ; and, in the midst of so much that is outwardly fair, you shed bitter tears over the blight of sin : you are at once drawn and driven to contemplate those regions never visited by the curse.

Who will not bless God, that he has given us eyes to see ? — that at every turn there open to view scenes suited to enlarge the mind, and elevate the soul ? — hill, stream, grove, city, cottage, or sweet flower,

smiling in every nook and cleft of this rough world. Does not all direct your thoughts upward, with ardent longing for its holy rest? If such be earth — smitten, shattered earth — what must heaven be? When earth and all the works that are therein shall be burned up, there will be a new heaven and new earth unspeakably more glorious than the present, in the sanctified recollection of saints on high.

CHAPTER IV.

GLIMPSES OF THE LAND.

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

WALLER.

“It is the most beautiful island that eyes ever beheld.” “As I arrived at this cape, there came a fragrance so good and soft of the flowers and trees of the land, that it was the sweetest thing in the world.” “The singing of the birds is such, that it seems as if one would never desire to depart hence.”

COLUMBUS.

It is worthy of remark, that in the New Testament we have only one account of a saint's departure to the Better Land. One reason, doubtless, is that attention may not be unduly turned to the closing scene; that a natural curiosity of that kind need not become excessive and profitless. The circumstances and feelings of a man in the hour of death merely are not of the greatest moment. It is to Christ's death and the Christian's life that the

word of God gives special prominence. One instance of dying repentance is given, that of the crucified thief, in order that no one may presume or despair; one instance of the experience of a departing Christian is supplied, to teach believers how to die. "He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." This vision was not addressed to the outward eye so much as to the eye of the soul; it was a parting of the veil, which up to that moment had hidden the world of glory from his view. Hitherto he had walked by faith; now there was a partial vision, spiritual vision of that world into which he was soon to enter, — a preparatory glance, foretokening what his disembodied spirit was about to enjoy fully and forever. Such discoveries are not appropriate at earlier periods; they are not compatible with the design of discipline, except near its close. It is, in the divine appointment, more a matter of epoch than of bodily condition. The martyr Stephen was in full possession of his powers. Violent hands had not yet been laid upon him when he saw the heavens opened. He was neither under the influence

of disease nor of drugs ; nor does there appear to have been the slightest degree of unhealthy mental excitement. If ever complete self-control and calmness were exhibited in the midst of surrounding tumult, they were by the protomartyr. Dissolution had not commenced when his inward eye began to gaze on the glories of the other world. The silver cord was not loosed, nor the golden bowl broken, for the first stone had not yet been thrown. Still he was on the very eve of departure. It was not martyrdom, nor was it perhaps miraculous inspiration, that so clarified his mental eye. Often is there something analogous in the later experiences of God's people, though more usually when the process of dislodgment has actually commenced ; when the first steps at least have been taken into the waters of Jordan.

“I have been,” said one of England's and one of Christ's choicest ministers, Walker of Truro, “I have been upon the wings of cherubim ! Heaven has in a manner been opened to me ! I shall soon be there !” And again : “O, my friend, had I strength to speak, I could tell you such news as would rejoice your very soul ! I have had such views of heaven ! But I am not able to say more.” The jubilant testimony of John Janeway was :

“Methinks I stand, as it were, with one foot in heaven, and the other upon earth. Methinks I hear the melody of heaven, and, by faith, see the angels waiting to carry my soul to the bosom of Jesus, and I shall be forever with the Lord in glory. And who can choose but rejoice in all this?”

And, in cases where dissolution was at hand, and the power of speech had failed, more than once have we seen a preconcerted signal given, — pressure of the hand and the like, — as the departing believer seemed to behold the heavens opened; and the face, pallid and distressed, has appeared “as it had been the face of an angel.” That last lingering smile was a reflection of His smile who stands at the right hand of God.

Often, too, we doubt not, is the apparent confusion and incoherency of a Christian’s death-bed simply the blending of impressions derived from the other side with those derived from this; for the soul seems to pass almost unconscious of the moment of a transit, and probably does not take note of the exact line of demarcation between two worlds. Often does the spirit seem to cross, and then retrace her steps along the neutral ground; or return briefly to her tabernacle, as you may yourself,

when going from home you hasten back to leave a message, or take one look more ; or, as the traveller ascending the Peak of Teneriffe, into the clear upper regions, may sometimes discern the plains beneath through a momentary rent in the clouds.

“ Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.” Whoever, like him, is full of the Holy Ghost, and full of heaven, cannot be otherwise than full of Jesus Christ. And what can be more fitting than that the believer, who has been sprinkled with Christ’s blood, clothed with Christ’s righteousness, over whom Christ has watched, and for whom he has interceded, who has been feeding upon Christ as the true bread which came down from heaven, who has been communing with him by the way, should now, at the close of his journey, have a clearer discovery of him, whom not having seen he has loved ? All their intelligent aspirations after heaven, all scriptural hopes of admission there, have had respect to him who is the everlasting glory of that abode. The New Testament knows nothing of a paradise in which he is not the central

object and all-attractive charm. Every conception of the New Jerusalem dissociated from Jesus Christ, every anticipation which has its origin and end elsewhere than in the allegiance of faith and love to him who, as Son of God, and Son of man, is seated at the right hand of majesty in the heavens, is spurious and delusive. He it is who opens heaven, and from whom beams the light thereof. Who else, then, should attract all eyes and all hearts? "I had a sight of heaven," said a dying countrywoman of ours to her pastor; "I had a sight of home, and I saw my Saviour!"

A friend called to tell Dr. Owen that he had put to press his "Meditations on the Glory of Christ." There was a momentary gleam in his languid eye as he answered, "I am glad to hear it; but O, brother Paine! the long wished-for day is come at last, in which I shall see that glory in another manner than I have ever done, or was capable of doing, in this world." A few hours of silence followed, and then that glory was to him revealed. Another, whose anticipations of heaven have been already cited in part, as he was drawing still nearer Canaan, exclaimed: "More praises yet; O, help me to praise God; I have now nothing else to do! I have done with prayer, and all other or-

dinances ; I have almost done with conversing with mortals I shall presently behold Christ himself, that died for me, and loved me, and washed me in his own blood. I shall, before a few hours are over, be in eternity, singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. I shall presently stand on Mount Zion, with an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and with Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant ; I shall hear the voice of much people, and be one amongst them, which shall say, Hallelujah, glory, salvation, honor and power, unto the Lord our God ; and again we shall say, Hallelujah."

Stephen saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God ; not sitting, not in the attitude of judge, but of helper and friend, risen to succor and welcome his approaching servant. He knew in whom he had believed. His confidence and fearlessness were not those of the soldier, rushing into battle, nor of the malefactor, under the influence of anodynes, or sunk in moral stupefaction. His is something more than absence of dread, for that does not prove a person to be even rational. His is a living faith in Jesus Christ, as the "Just One," the Lord his righteousness, who had abolished death, so that to him it is swallowed up in victory. He has believed

before ; now he sees Him who is the faithful and true witness, and he cannot do otherwise than yield up his soul into the hands of Him who is able to keep that which is committed unto him. Hence his direct, unhesitating prayer : “ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Thanks for that model prayer of a departing saint ! May it be the last that the writer and reader shall breathe, when we are called to follow !

“ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ! ” How many thousands, martyrs and others, have already breathed their last, uttering this prayer ! It would seem as if that leader of the Christian host, in their journey to the Better Land, were moved to this brief ejaculation that he might supply the most appropriate formula for every dying believer. “ Lord Jesus, have mercy on me ! Lord Jesus, have mercy on me ! Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ! ” prayed Bishop Hooper, in the midst of the flames. And on the same fiery couch, and in the same strain, prayed Latimer, Patrick Hamilton, and Rowland Taylor. With the penitent exclamation, “ This unworthy right hand ! this unworthy right hand ! ” Cranmer intermingled the believing cry, “ Lord Jesus receive my spirit ! ” Woman too, gentle, constant, trusting woman, has sent up the same, in

the hour of martyrdom. It was Margaret Wilson, in the reign of King James, whom the Papists took down to the Bay of Wigton, at low water, and bound to a stake, there to await the advancing tide. The waters come slowly in, closing round her, and rising higher and higher. They reach her throat; but that young martyr of eighteen still sings, with a loud, clear voice, the twenty-third Psalm. Her mouth fills; she gurgles forth, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" and goes to sleep beneath the tide. But this has not been used by those alone who have witnessed for Jesus with their blood. The venerable bishop and reformer, Jewell, prayed, "Lord, take from me my spirit. Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace. Break off all delays; suffer thy servant to come to thee; come and take him to be with thee, — Lord, receive my spirit!" And by many another has that brief petition been offered, — by the consumptive, as his breath slowly failed, and all utterance ceased, — by the prisoner expiring in his cell, and by the voyager, sinking in the waves.

"Saviour, into thy loving hands

My feeble spirit I commit,

While wandering in these Border-Lands

Until thy voice shall summon it.

These Border-Lands are calm and still,
And solemn are their silent shades ;
And my heart welcomes them, until
The light of life's long evening fades.

I heard them spoken of with dread,
As fearful and unquiet places ;
Shades where the living and the dead
Look sadly in each other's faces.

But since Thy hand hath led me here,
And I have seen the Border-Land ;
Seen the dark river flowing near,
Stood on its brink, as now I stand, —

There has been nothing to alarm
My trembling soul ; how could I fear
While thus encircled with thine arm ?
I never felt thee half so near."

CHAPTER V.

THE PASSAGE.

The heir of heaven, henceforth I fear not death,
In Christ I live; in Christ I draw the breath
Of the true life; — let, then, earth, sea and sky,
Make war against me! On my heart I show
Their mighty Master's seal. In vain they try
To end my life, that can but end its woe.
Is that a death-bed where a Christian lies?
Yes! but not his — 't is Death himself there dies!

COLERIDGE.

THE expiring believer does not see death: he sees the heavens opened, and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God. It is no dark valley through which he passes, but he moves along the highway of the Lord, to the palace of the great King. He escapes out of this Golgotha into the only true land of the living. Stephen was not vanquished on the field of martyrdom; he came off victor over enemies, human and Satanic; yea, he was more than conqueror; cast out of the city, he ascended to heaven. Amidst the shouts of an infuriated mob, and a shower of stones, "He fell asleep."

None of these things move him, neither counteth he his life dear unto him. He is full of the Holy Ghost, and so is full of joy and peace. He was not killed ; he has only fallen asleep in Jesus ;

“ Like one who draws the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

Never did evening shadows lengthen more quietly, nor the dews come down more benignly, than he, than every true believer, sinks to rest. “ He is not dead, but sleepeth.” “ They which sleep in Christ are not perished.” They live ; they live in him, and with him, — a life higher, holier far than this. The protomartyr, now opening his eyes as never before on the glory of God, and on the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God, can say, “ I laid me down and slept ; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.” The French Assembly may vote “ Death an eternal sleep ;” the atheist Mirabeau, when speech fails, may spend his last strength in writing, “ Death is but a sleep ;” the atheist Danton may play off his horrid levity on the scaffold — “ Let me go to sleep ;” but that is to fall asleep in sin, sorrow, wrath, it is to fall into outer darkness, “ where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.”

Stephen, in holy calmness, in the quiet sublimity of a triumphant faith, prays for himself—“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;” prays for his murderers, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;” bids earth good-night, and sinks into the repose of heaven. “So he giveth his beloved sleep.” In the hour of dissolution, every saint in Christ Jesus, whether sinking under a shower of stones, or the assaults of disease, hears a voice saying, “Come up hither!” Before escaping from this prison, light begins to break in. Gleams from the sunshine of everlasting glory find their way to his cell.

“O what joy!” exclaimed Dr. Gordon. “People have said that death is frightful. I look on it with pleasure. I see no monsters around me. Death! I see no death at my bedside. It is that benign Saviour waiting to take me. I could not have a fear. This is not the testimony of one who has nothing to live for. I am in the prime of life, with comforts and friends around me. But the prospect of heaven is more than all.” “I fear I am sinfully impatient in so longing after heaven; but it is so glorious! Christ, not death, is about to take me from earth. There is no death to the Christian. That glorious gospel takes away death.” Such a departure is *mors sine morte*,—a dying with-

out death ; it is the believer's birth-day of eternity, — his last, best birth-day, his birth into glory unutterable and unending.

The saint, no less than the sinner, must depart this life. Of all the millions who have yet lived, two only have been translated ; and, in time to come, those only who are alive at the coming of our Lord, shall in the twinkling of an eye be changed, without tasting death ; but the law is — and these exceptions are hardly to be named — that all must die. The most eminent saints, the men and women after God's own heart ; the beloved disciple, — the one just referred to, — who, on the eve of departure, saw the heavens open and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God ; and he who, years before decease, was caught up to the third heaven, have alike been obliged to pass through the same door into the unseen world. It was revealed unto venerable Simeon that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ ; but the sight of him who is a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel, made it no less necessary for him to behold the King of Terrors.

That is the epoch of dissolution when soul and body part company till the resurrection. The substance of the soul suffers no harm, and its con-

sciousness no abatement, by that change. “Then shall the dust return unto the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” “And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom.” Paul speaks of death as the hour of his departure, and departure to be with Christ. The believer’s soul is then disembodied, not destroyed, not consigned to sleep, but sent forth, active and immortal. His tent is struck for the last time, and he passes over Jordan. The ship goes to pieces, but the passenger is safe. The believer may one moment be in the agonies of dissolution, the next reposing calmly in Abraham’s bosom.

Many tribes of men have imagined that for a long time, if not forever, souls linger about the bodies or the dwellings they formerly occupied. The belief has been very extensive, that they assume a shadowy but visible form, and thus present themselves as spectres. Even a Christian council, in the fourth century, forbade to kindle a light in burial places, that the spirits of departed saints might not be disturbed. But the souls of believers do immediately pass into glory. They go not first into a middle world, — neither heaven, nor hell, — a purgatory, where, as Romanists imagine, their souls

are cleansed by fire. The Council of Trent decreed, "If any man shall say that after justification the fault is so blotted out that there remains no guilt of temporal punishment, to be endured in this life, or in the future life of purgatory, before the soul can be admitted into the kingdom of heaven, let him be accursed." But Christ said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" and thus our Lord himself comes under the anathema of the Man of Sin, exalting himself above all that is called God.

Not a shadow of support does that dogma of purgatory find in the word of God. It has been built up by fancy alone, aided by popular heathen notions concerning a land of shades, where souls are stretched out in the wind, or thrust into water or fire, for purification. Thence comes this *Limbus Patrum*, with prayers and masses for the dead.

The souls of believers do immediately pass, not into purgatory, not into other bodies by transmigration, not into a long lethargy, not into annihilation, nor into any other state which paganism has conjured up, but into glory. They pass into a glorious world, — a glorious city, where is a glorious temple; where is none but the most exalted society, holy angels, and glorified saints, where their occupa

tions and the songs are most ennobling, none being lower than glory to God in the highest. They are made kings and priests unto God; the palm-branch is put into their hands; the crowns of glory are placed upon their heads.

But who are received to that abode? There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth. it is to the spirits of just men made perfect that they are come; they are clothed with white linen, which is the righteousness of saints. Immediately upon entrance there they find their character perfectly congenial to the holy occupations and society of the place. They are unabashed in the presence of unfallen angels and the most patriarchal saints in glory. How this is effected, except in general through the grace and by the Spirit of God, we do not undertake to say, any more than how it is that the first spiritual change is wrought, which quickens a soul dead in trespasses and sins into a vital union with God. Subjectively, the change must, if possible, be greater than that of regeneration. In the latter there is a change of relation, in which the sinner, from being condemned, becomes a justified son of God, once for all, and forever.

It need not, therefore, be repeated at death. But great as is the transition from utter spiritual

death to the first movings of life, great as may be the growth of grace thenceforward to the end of probation, there remains a change, scarcely if at all less in degree, when the state of partial sanctification gives place to perpetual holiness. Up to the measure of capacity, holiness becomes complete in the soul of a believer passing into glory. A child may, without change of symmetry, increase in stature; so with the soul made perfect in holiness, there are no longer any errors in the understanding, perverseness in the will, or defect in the affections. All is harmony, light and love; the image of God is there, in all its attractive lineaments, so far as the capacity of each will allow; but each has scope for growth through all eternity.

The transition is doubtless instantaneous. It is no tiresome walk down through a lonely, dark valley; it is no weary flight upward, as the eagle mounts, higher and higher; but no sooner is a believer's soul disembodied, than it is in Paradise. The partition once broken down, what shall hinder an immediate view of all beyond? And O, what a morning is that day-break of glory! The sun of righteousness shines in all its brightness. It is the effulgence of Christ's person which lights up that whole far-stretching world, and sheds a quickening

radiance on every resident there. If, two thousand years before Christ's coming on earth, Abraham rejoiced to see his day, what must be the joy of seeing him as he now is, at the right hand of majesty, in the heavens!

Stray beams of his lustre often fall on the dying believer before his soul leaves its tenement. "This is heaven begun," said Rev. Thomas Scott; "I have done with darkness, forever — forever. Satan is vanquished. Nothing now remains but salvation, with eternal glory — eternal glory." Come to the veranda of a Braminic temple. In the last spasms of Asiatic cholera, Gordon Hall cries, "Glory, glory, glory!" and he

"Passed through Glory's morning gate,
And walked in Paradise."

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth!" Blessed are the dead — not survivors, not the most favored of those who remain here, still sinning and repenting, and so imperfectly serving God — but blessed are the dead in Christ who have ceased from sin, are made perfect in holiness, and have passed into Paradise.

Transplanted trees flourish best. Shall we grudge those plants of righteousness their better soil and

purser air ? Shall we grudge an escape from the hovel into the palace of the Great King ? “ Children,” said the mother of John Wesley, the last thing she uttered, “ Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God.” Music sounds best after sunset. It is no time to mourn here, while angels clap their wings, and the whole family above cry, Welcome home ! Who would keep his tears for the coronation day ?

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord !

“ Thus star by star declines,
Till all are passed away ;
As morning high and higher shines
To pure and perfect day.
Nor sink those stars in empty night,
But hide themselves in heaven’s own light.”

Shall not this abate the dread of dying ? That dread is instinctive ; it is deep. By most, death is regarded as *ultimum terribilium*, — the extremest of things terrible ; but is it not gain, great, unspeakable gain, to the child of God, to die ? And shall we hesitate to encounter the little inconvenience of stepping ashore from this shattered vessel ? Why so in love with perils ? Whence this fondness for buffetings, sickness, and protracted wreck ? Whence this aversion to enter the haven of everlasting bliss ?

For all saints in Christ Jesus, death has been unstinged. What if the serpent, deprived of its fangs, do hiss? — he is harmless.

“How hard it is to die!” remarked a friend to an expiring believer. “O, no, no!” he replied; “easy dying, blessed dying, glorious dying!” Looking up at the clock, he said, “I have experienced more happiness in dying, two hours this day, than in my whole life. It is worth a whole life to have such an end as this. O, I never thought that such a poor worm as I could come to such a glorious death!”

Chrysostom, when banished, said to a friend, “You now begin to lament my banishment, but I have done so for a long time; for since I knew that heaven is my country, I have esteemed the whole world a place of exile. Constantinople, whence I am expelled, is as far from Paradise as the desert whither they send me.”

A few moments before he expired Edmund Auger said to a friend, “Do you see that blessed assembly who await my arrival? Do you hear that sweet music, with which those holy men invite me, that I may henceforth be a partaker of their happiness? How delightful is it to be in the society of blessed spirits. Let us go. We must go. Let me go.” O, death where is thy sting?

What is it to die ? To believers, it is to drop the body of this death, and to put on a joyous immortality ; to pass from darkness to everlasting sunlight ; to cease dreaming, and commence a waking existence ; yes, to awake in the likeness of God — satisfied, fully and forever satisfied. What is it to die ? To feel the last pang, to shed the last tear, to raise the shield of faith against Satan's last dart. It is to go home to God ; to open the eyes on the enthroned Mediator ; to close the ears upon all discords, all sounds of woe, all the falsehoods, the maledictions, the blasphemies of earth, and open them to the harmonies of heaven. What is it to die ? It is to stop sinning, to cease grieving the Spirit and grieving the Saviour, to close up the inconsistencies of terrestrial profession, and commence a forever blameless life in bliss. What is it to die ? To lean on the Almighty for a few steps down a narrow valley, to step out of Jordan, upon the borders of the Better Land ; to pass up to the New Jerusalem ; to enter by one of those gates of pearl into the city ; to have ten thousand angels come and utter their cordial welcome ; to see — O, let me die the death of the righteous ! — to see the Saviour smile benignantly, and to hear him say, “ Well done, good

and faithful servant ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord !” That is to die.

But, in order to that, there needs be “an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast,” — a most earnest “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” It was not in the hour of martyrdom that Stephen first beheld the Lamb of God. The religion that is good for nothing in life, is good for nothing in death. The time will come, when we shall need a strong arm near, and a firm faith to grasp it. The sentimentalities of fading flowers, and falling leaves, and of moonlight musing, all the prettinesses of poetry, all natural amiabilities, and mere natural charities, however cultivated, will avail nothing in the day when God shall require the soul — in the day when we stand at his bar. Faith alone will suffice, — an appropriating, justifying faith ; an operative, vitalizing faith ; a hearty, adoring faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who stands as Redeemer and Advocate at the right hand of God.

CHAPTER VI.

RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS.

I count the hope no day-dream of the mind,
No vision fair of transitory hue,
The souls of those, whom once on earth we knew,
And loved, and walked with in communion kind,
Departed hence, again in heaven to find.
Such hope to nature's sympathies is true ;
And such, we deem, the holy word to view
Unfolds ; an antidote for grief designed,
One drop from comfort's well. 'T is true we read
The Book of life ; but if we read amiss,
By God prepared, fresh treasures shall succeed
To kinsmen, fellows, friends, a vast abyss
Of joy ; nor aught the longing spirit need
To fill its measure of enormous bliss.

BISHOP MANT

MANY seem to conceive of heaven mainly as a rendezvous for friends ; that, immediately upon entering its mansions, the soul is engrossed in recognizing and being recognized by earthly associates ; that future bliss consists almost entirely in the renewal of domestic attachments, and in the mere luxuries of amiable intercourse. Not a few, who entertain more scriptural views, still betray an ex-

cessive curiosity on this point; impatient to know what can be fully known only in another world. Revelation was not given, nor did Christ come to gratify inquisitiveness, but to withdraw men from sin, and make them monuments of his grace in glory. Yet, a proper discussion of the subject, if it remove needless doubts, and render anticipation more definite, will not be in vain: it will leave the mind free from vain inquiries, and prepared to relish more important themes.

Here we must look for guidance to the lively oracles. But, in doing so, it will not be amiss first to glance at the working of certain minds on this subject, when not enlightened by the word of God. The philosopher at Athens, with the fatal hemlock in his hand, discourses thus: "If the common expression be true, that death conveys us to those regions which are inhabited by the spirits of departed men, will it not be unspeakably happy to escape from the hands of mere nominal judges, and appear before those who truly deserve the name, such as Minos and Rhadamanthus, and to associate with all who have maintained the cause of truth and rectitude? Is it possible for you to look upon this as an unimportant journey? Is it nothing to converse with Orpheus, and Homer, and Hesiod?

Believe me, I would cheerfully suffer many a death on condition of realizing such a privilege. With what pleasure could I leave the world, to hold communion with Palamedes, Ajax, and others, who like me have had an unjust sentence pronounced against them ! Then would I explore the wisdom of Ulysses, Lysippus, and that illustrious chief who led out the vast army of the Greeks against the city of Troy. Nor should I be condemned to death for indulging, as I have done here, in free inquiry.”

Cicero puts language like this into the mouth of Cato :—“ For my own part, I feel myself transported with the most ardent impatience to join the society of my two departed friends, your illustrious fathers, whose characters I greatly respected, and whose persons I sincerely loved. Nor is this, my earnest desire, confined to those excellent persons alone, with whom I was formerly connected : I ardently wish to visit also those celebrated worthies, of whose honorable conduct I have heard and read much, or whose virtues I have myself commemorated in some of my writings. To this glorious assembly I am speedily advancing ; and I would not be turned back in my journey, even on the assured condition that my youth, like that of Pelias, should be again restored.

O, glorious day! when I shall retire from this low and sordid scene, to assemble with the divine congregation of departed spirits; and not with those only whom I have just now mentioned, but with my dear Cato, that best of sons and most valuable of men! It was my sad fate to lay his body on the funeral pile, when by the course of nature I had reason to hope he would have performed the same last office to mine. His soul, however, did not desert me, but still looked back on me in its flight to those happy mansions, to which he was assured I should one day follow him. If I seemed to bear his death with fortitude, it was by no means that I did not most sensibly feel the loss I had sustained: it was because I supported myself with the consoling reflection that we could not long be separated."

Thus was it that anciently minds of a high order and finished culture—reflecting and philosophic minds—indulged in delightful anticipations. We open classic poets, and find similar ideas frequently recurring. It moves us well-nigh to tears, as we contemplate their delineation of shadowy scenes in the future, where recognition takes place indeed, but the dim, vanishing forms thwart all attempts at satisfactory intercourse.

Turning to ruder nations, and less cultivated

minds, we find that the ancient Germans expected to meet their friends after death in a beautiful, peaceful valley. The custom, among many pagan nations, of slaying the servants of princes, that they may attend them in another world, involves of course the idea of recognition.

A belief of this kind, though deep and general, does not, however, prove its own correctness; it will have very little weight with those who have a more sure word of prophecy; yet must we regard it as somewhat significant, and closely related to an essential element of the human soul, indicating a want in the general heart, thus plainly expressed. We would give to it, in connection with this subject, some such a place as we assign to the general belief of immortality in an argument to establish that belief.

Taking this side glance, as we approach the inspired volume, we naturally inquire, why should it not be so? What reasonable objection can be urged against it? So far from there being just ground to oppose it, does not every enlightened and Christian mind long that it should be true? What would society on earth be without mutual recognition? And is heaven a less social place? Is the demand for this less imperative there? Will our beloved

Christian friend be less himself after death than now, or lose those characteristics which attach us to him here ?

We open the Bible. We peruse it carefully. From first to last we find nothing that conflicts with this belief. If this were all we could say, even that would be in its favor. Here is our first proof, and though negative, yet it is valid. But let us examine what the Scriptures teach respecting the abode and condition of the glorified. In respect to their condition, we find that it is eminently social. They are represented as citizens, intermingling freely ; but there is no intimation that previous to their meeting there they were all strangers. They form a family, whose members were once on earth ; and can their quickened recollection be oblivious of former acquaintance ? Do they know less than they did here ? Does not Lazarus know in whose bosom he is ? All the conceptions of heaven suggested by the Bible favor the idea of future recognition.

This is our second step in the examination of divine testimony. Let us now proceed to a scrutiny of particular passages. The New Testament is before us. Our Lord speaks : — “ And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and

Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” Will they meet at that banquet without recognition? Again:—“Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Can that be fulfilled while the parties are strangers to each other? And when, at the last judgment, he shall speak of things done to “these my brethren,” will they not recognize those who have done them either an injury or a kindness? If, on the mount of transfiguration, the disciples knew Moses and Elias, who had already been a thousand years in glory, will not all disciples know them, and know one another, on the Mount Zion above?

We open letters from the great Apostle, and read:—“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also, by Jesus, and shall *present us with you* ;” and, again, 1 Thess. 2 : 19 : “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” We conclude with confidence that Paul expected to recognize those Thessalonian converts amid the throng

before the throne. Turning back to the Old Testament, and hearing patriarchs speak of "being gathered to their fathers," and David of "going to the child," we infer that they expected to know their kindred in the Better Land. In the fourteenth of Isaiah we read:—"Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" If that be true among the lost, shall it not be also among the blessed? If Dives in torment recognizes Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom, shall not Lazarus recognize those who are near and round about him?

Neither the Old Testament nor the New goes into minute details respecting the heavenly state, or teaches future recognition, positively and directly; but, in view of the general expectation of the

human mind, the absence of adverse testimony, and these decided though incidental teachings, we may be sure that Christian friends will know one another in the future world.

In a preliminary part of the chapter, we glanced at the character of belief on this subject in lands not illumined by the gospel. Let us now glance at the belief of those who have had the holy Scriptures. Cyprian, in the third century, responds thus:—
“Who, finding himself in a strange country, does not earnestly desire to return to his fatherland? Who, about to sail in haste for his home and his friends across the sea, does not long for a friendly wind, that he may the sooner throw his arms around his beloved ones? We believe Paradise to be our fatherland; our parents are the patriarchs: why should we not haste and fly to see our home and greet our parents? A great host of beloved friends awaits us there; a numerous and various crowd, parents, brethren, children, who are secure in a blessed immortality, and only concerned for us, are looking with desire for our arrival. To see and embrace these — what a mutual joy will this be to us and them! What bliss, without the fear of death, to live eternally in the heavenly kingdom! How vast, and of eternal duration, is our celestial

blessedness ! There is the glorious choir of the apostles ; there the host of joyful prophets ; there the innumerable company of the martyrs, crowned on account of their victories in the conflict of suffering. There, in triumph, are the pure virgins. There the merciful — who have fed and blessed the poor, and, according to their Lord's direction, have exchanged earthly for heavenly treasures — now receive their glorious reward. To these, dearly beloved brethren, let us hasten with strong desire, and ardently wish soon to be with them, and with Christ."

In the fourth century, Chrysostom speaks : — " If we hear him [Paul] here, we shall certainly see him hereafter ; if not as standing near him, yet see him we certainly shall, glistening near the throne of the King. Where the cherubim sing the glory, where the seraphim are flying, there shall we see Paul, with Peter, both as a chief and leader of the choir of the saints, and shall enjoy his generous love."

Pass on to the period of the Reformation. The great German reformer, the evening before his death, being asked what he thought on this point, remarks as follows : — " How did Adam do ? He had never in his life seen Eve — he lay and slept — yet, when he awoke, he did not say, Whence

came you ? who are you ? — but he said, ‘ This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.’ How did he know that this woman did not spring forth from a stone ? He knew it because he was full of the Holy Spirit, and in possession of the true knowledge of God. Into this knowledge and image we shall, in the future life, again be renewed in Christ; so that we shall know father, mother, and one another, on sight, better than did Adam and Eve.”

Zwingle, the Swiss reformer, speaks:—“ There you may hope to see the society, the assembly, and the dwelling together of all the holy, wise, faithful, heroic, firm, and virtuous, who have lived since the beginning of the world. There you shall see the two Adams, the saved and the Saviour. There you will see Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, Phineas, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, and the mother of God, of whom he has prophesied. There you will see David, Hezekiah, Josiah, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, &c. There you will see yours who have gone before you, and all your forefathers who have departed this life in the faith. In a word, no virtuous person, no holy mind, no believing soul,

has lived from the beginning of the world, or shall yet live, that you shall not there meet with God.”

Another century rolls on, and we hear the sentiments of him who discoursed so sweetly of the saints’ everlasting rest : — “ I must confess,” says Richard Baxter, “ as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in heaven principally kindles my love to them on earth. If I thought I should never know them, and consequently never love them, after this life is ended, I should in reason number them with temporal things, and love them as such. But I now delight to converse with my pious friends, in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them forever ; and I take comfort in those of them who are dead or absent, as believing I shall shortly meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love that shall there be perfected.” His cotemporary and friend, John Eliot, for many months before he died, would often say that he was shortly going to heaven, and that he would carry a deal of good news thither with him : he said he would carry tidings to the old founders of New England, who were now in glory, that church work was yet carried on among us ; that the number of our churches was continually increasing ; and that the churches were still

kept as big as they were, by the daily additions of those who shall be saved. “ Shall I know you in heaven ? ” said an inquiring red man to John Eliot himself. The old chief Shenandoah wished to be buried beside his religious teacher, that at the resurrection he might go up with him. That Choctaw is still a living officer in the church, who wished a ministerial visitor to turn round, that he might have a full view of his face, so as to know him again in heaven.

These are specimens, taken from different periods and countries of Christendom, from different races and ranks of men, among all which, however, is found the common belief of future recognition. Would that belief have been so universal were it unreasonable or unscriptural ?

If, then, this hope of future recognition has been so general even among the heathen ; if, while we long for its fulfilment, we find nothing to forbid our hoping that such may be the case ; most of all, if the Scriptures present no difficulties, but strong incidental evidence, — evidence which for centuries has satisfied believers in the most varied conditions, — we may well believe that Christian friends on earth will certainly recognize one another in heaven. That affection which yearns toward Machpelah,

which carves touching memorials on the tombs of the departed the world over, and which is sanctioned by the inspiration that cannot err, — that affection is a true seer ; and it would be like killing one of the prophets, and stoning them that are sent unto us, should we uproot it from the heart.

It is not, of course, personal friends alone who are to know one another in heaven. The saints in glory will no doubt ultimately all become acquainted with each other. How many will at different times inquire, “ What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ? ” And how many delighted disciples, on that mount above, will exclaim, through everlasting ages, “ It is good for us to be here ! ”

O what hours will those be when we shall shake hands with Enoch, David and Paul, — when we shall feel around our necks the pressure of Abraham’s arms, and the beloved disciple ! Do we wish to talk with the venerable reformers, martyrs and Puritans ? — with John Bunyan, Philip Doddridge and President Edwards ? It will soon be gratified.

“ I want to go to heaven,” said Dr. Emmons, in his old age. “ It is an inexpressibly glorious place. The more I think of it, the more delightful it ap-

pears.” “And I want to see *who* is there ; I want to see brother Sanford, and brother Niles, and brother Spring, and Dr. Hopkins, and Dr. West, and a great many other ministers, with whom I have been associated in this world, but who have gone before me. I believe I shall meet them in heaven ; and, it seems to me, our meeting there must be peculiarly interesting.” He added, “I want to see, too, the old prophets, and the apostles. What a society there will be in heaven ! There we shall see such men as Moses, and Isaiah, and Elijah, and David, and Paul ; I want to see Paul more than any man I can think of.”

The question, Shall we know our friends and others in heaven ? is answered. The intimations of God’s word all favor it ; and those intimations accord with the irrepressible demands of the human soul. It was doubtless, in part, to encourage this hope that Moses and Elias appeared to the disciples, and talked with them on the mount of glory. And if those who never met on earth are to recognize one another in heaven, shall not personal friends much more ? Most evidently was it the apostle’s expectation to recognize his Corinthian, Colossian and Thessalonian friends ; and has he been disappointed ? And will not other, yea, all

the sanctified intimacies of earth, be perpetuated in the everlasting home of the redeemed? Every place of holy fellowship and prayer answers, Yes. Every inner recess of the heart answers, Yes.

Blessed gathering! Blessed greetings! Joyful indeed will be the mutual recognition of earthly friends who are one in Christ. Joyful indeed will be the meeting of those who have taken sweet counsel together, who have devoutly prayed and sung together, who have been companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. But unspeakable must be the joy of those who then behold in each other the instruments of their own conversion, or the results of their labors for the salvation of others, and jointly give all the glory to a present God. And O, what heart will then be large enough for the rapture of a successful ambassador of Christ!—of one like Paul, meeting the multitudes saved through his instrumentality? Signal indeed must be the grace that shall prevent such a soul from being completely overwhelmed in the transport of that hour. To find that his ministrations were owned beyond his thoughts; that many, by his preaching, were turned to righteousness; that a prayer for some apparently hopeless sinner was answered; to find youthful

professors edified, and aged saints comforted ; that churches were refreshed, it may be, by his presence ; that, directly or indirectly, foreign evangelization was accelerated by him ; and all, only because sovereign grace called, enabled and persuaded him to the same. O, it requires other than human pens to describe the emotions of such men in glory !

But what friend in heaven do we most desire to see ? No one can enter there whose heart looks not first of all at him who is seated on the great white throne. What are our ideas of the city of God ? Is not Christ the light thereof ? Is not the glory which he had before the world was, to be there displayed ? Did the Eternal Son take a human form ? — in it agonize in Gethsemane, be scourged in the judgment-hall, crucified on Golgotha, sleep in the sepulchre, and rise to heaven, and shall any other human form divert the eye from that ? Are those the scars that speak of precious blood once shed for you ? Are those the lips that cried, “ It is finished ” ? And will we soon withdraw our gaze ? No, much as we love all other friends, there is one in the kingdom of heaven who will make us temporarily forget them all. For years — if there be years there — ay, for centuries,

it may be, will the Lamb of God absorb our souls. When we reach the city of God, we shall not, first of all, grasp the hands of present acquaintances. Of such an affront to the proprieties of heaven, no one, presented at the court of the King of kings, was ever guilty. Bowing down in such gratitude as we never knew before, gazing in a holy ecstasy of love, breaking forth into high and ceaseless praises, there shall we stand age after age. Not, it may be, till the world has been burnt up — not till the elect have all been gathered home to their Father's house, shall we think of looking away from that brightness of the Father's glory, our Saviour, our dear Redeemer. Eternity will be long enough for all the sanctified attachments of earth to have full scope. But the first song, the everlasting song, will be, "Now unto him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory forever."

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEAVENLY BANQUET.

“ Apostles, martyrs, prophets, there,
Around my Saviour stand,
And soon my friends in Christ below
Will join the glorious band.

Jerusalem ! my happy home,
My soul still pants for thee ;
Then shall my sorrows have an end,
When I thy joys shall see.”

FEW remarks are more trite than that man is a social being. Of all known beings he is the most so. For aught that appears to the contrary, he has a greater variety of desires and affections, and these possess greater flexibility and capacity of expansion, than exist in any other creature in the universe. The forms under which association takes place are exceedingly numerous, both in the family and community, as also in various special societies and combinations ; but they all illustrate a common and powerful principle of human nature Love and fear, the necessities and conveniences of

existence, will draw men together, in larger or smaller circles, notwithstanding wide diversities of culture. It is in company that they roam and pitch their tents, that they engage in war and amusement. Commerce, the arts, law, history, and language itself, are only manifestations of this universal characteristic. Isolation is artificial. It does violence to nature. The man absolutely removed from human intercourse is withdrawn from the atmosphere which all must breathe to live. A hermit, happy or useful, is an impossibility.

“ The remark was shrewd,
How sweet, how passing sweet, is solitude !
But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper, — Solitude is sweet.”

The questions arise, Is this pervading element of our nature extinguished by death ? or does the love of society survive the grave ? and, if so, under what circumstances will it be manifested ?

In the preceding chapter we inferred, from the considerations, that personal identity is to be preserved ; that, doubtless, all which is essential to identity is just that, no more, no less, which is requisite for recognition ; that all the faculties of the mind - - perception and recollection among

them — are to be wonderfully quickened ; that it does violence to the demands of our nature to suppose the opposite ; that no valid objections can be adduced ; and that the Scripture intimations strongly favor it ; — from all this it was concluded that Christian friends will know one another in heaven. But is simple recognition all ? Are saints merely to meet in glory, then go their several ways, without further intercourse ; or to sit down side by side in lasting silence ?

Why are we to know and be known ; why is memory, with quickened powers, to summon up the past ; why is the heart to rejoice in the continuance of former attachments, only stronger and purer than before, — if it be not that communion, more free and exalted, is to be enjoyed forever ? All reasons for recognition derive their main force from something beyond, to which recognition is only an introduction. If occasion required, we might summon before us the same witnesses who gave their testimony in favor of recognition. The venerable philosopher of Athens would say, “ Are there not numbers who, upon the death of their lovers, wives, and children, have chosen, of their own accord, to enter Hades, induced by the hope of seeing there those they loved, and of living with

them again?" The classic poets would picture to us scenes of uninterrupted social life amid Elysian islands. If we were again to consult the Christian fathers, Ambrose would reply, "Let us believe that Valentinian is ascended from the desert; that is to say, from this dry and uncultivated place, to those flowery delights, where, being united with his brother, he enjoys the pleasures of everlasting life." Or, if testimony from without were desired, we might pause to catch the last words of the great Arabian impostor: "Yes, I come among you, my fellow-citizens on high." In Calvin's farewell letter to the aged Farel we read: "God bless you, best and noblest brother; and if God permits you still longer to live, forget not the tie which binds us, which will be just as agreeable to us in heaven as it has been useful to the church on earth."

If stricken parental hearts prompt our search, the soothing voice of Philip Doddridge will greet our ear: "Let me be thankful for the pleasing hope that, though God loves my child too well to permit it to return to me, he will, ere long, bring me to it. And then that endeared paternal affection, which would have been a cord to tie me to earth, and have added new pangs to my removal from it, will be as a golden chain to draw me up

wards, and add one further charm and joy even to paradise itself. Was this my desolation, this my sorrow, to part with thee for a few days that I might receive thee forever (Philem. v. 15), and find thee what thou art? It is for no language but that of heaven to describe the sacred joy which such a meeting must occasion."

Does the sundering of the closest intimacy on earth shape our inquiries? John Newton's thoughts turn in the same direction: "There, I humbly trust, my dear Mary is waiting for me, and, in the Lord's own time, I hope to join with her, and all the redeemed, in praising the Lamb, once upon the cross, now upon the throne of glory."

The desires and anticipations of a pastor would lead once more to consult Richard Baxter, who, in turn, asks, "Why, then, may not I, with distinct conceptions and joyful desires, look after the souls of my departed friends, that are now in the celestial kingdom? Though malignity hath scorned me for naming some few in my 'Saints' Rest,' being such as the despisers hated, yet I forbear not, on such accounts, to solace myself by naming more, but because they are more than it is fit to number. In all places where I have lived how many excellent souls (though here they were not perfect) are

gone to Christ. How sweet is the remembrance of the communion which I had with many of them in Shrewsbury, and other parts of Shropshire ; of many at Dudley, and the adjoining parts ; of multitudes at Kidderminster, Bendley, and other parts of Worcestershire ; of abundance at Coventry, and other parts of Warwickshire ; and of many where I have sojourned in other parts of the land ; and, above all, in London, and the adjoining parts ! But it is heaven that is spangled with these spiritual stars ; the place honored with them, and they with it, and all by Christ.” Does the thought of some cross-bearing missionary occur to us ? It did to Henry Martyn : “ I feel my heart knit to this dear man [Brainard], and really rejoice to think of meeting him in heaven.”

But all this is not necessary. It may be suggestive ; it certainly is not decisive. We need something else than the pleasing dreams of even good men, on which to base our hopes. Are we, after all, sure there will be any such table spread ? Impostors are abundant. We remember the words of Gamaliel : “ Before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves ; who was slain ; and all, as many as obeyed him, were

scattered and brought to naught." Experience has taught us to be wary of specious promises and flattering proclamations; and must we not be incredulous, when an announcement comes touching a scene that lies in another and future world?

We pause then; but prudence does not call on us to question the veracity of him who is the faithful and true witness. It is the King's own Son who comes to our borders. He comes direct from the kingdom where this entertainment is to be given, and where he has been a resident, not alone from time immemorial, but from immemorial eternity. He is familiar with all the counsels there; he knows, for he has made the arrangements which concern all present and future inhabitants of that world. Listen to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we know, and testify that we have seen;" "That ye may eat at my table, in my kingdom;" "And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." This is not an invitation; it is a proclamation: "Many shall come." The feast is to take place; many will be there. No disease, no disaster by fire or flood, will prevent that marriage-feast, or delay one of the destined guests.

“These are the true sayings of God.” And what is the simple thought couched under this figure of reclining at Christ’s table, in his kingdom? What, but this, that life in heaven is social, and that saints are not isolated; that enjoyments are common? “He hath prepared for them a city.” “Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.” It is “the general assembly and church of the first-born.” “And they sing as it were a new song.”

And who will be there? Who are to constitute the guests in Christ’s kingdom, contributing and sharing each a portion of those high social delights?

That gathering will embrace Abel, Enoch and Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Joshua, Samuel, David and Josiah, Isaiah and all the prophets, John the Baptist and the evangelists, Stephen and the whole glorious army of martyrs. Who shall undertake to estimate the pleasure and profit of conversing freely with him who was the first to enter heaven; with him, who, in the midst of antediluvian giants, walked with God; with him who passed out of the ark on Mount Ararat, built the first altar in the solitude of a depopulated world, and gazed on its first bow of promise; with

him who built an altar on Mount Moriah, and with him who was laid an offering thereon; with him who put off his shoes on Sinai, and forty days and forty nights spake familiarly with God, in the thick cloud that was on the mount? O, what will be the luxury of listening to the sweet psalmist of Israel, as he strikes his heavenly lyre; of sitting down under the tuition, successively, of all those holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost! What rapture must there be in talking with those who had the gift of tongues, who wrought many miracles, and — what is far more memorable — went everywhere, in the midst of perils and reproaches, as the first ambassadors for Christ! What shall I say more? “For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” Yet was it ordered that they, without us, should not be made perfect. Our presence at that table was wanting. One reason why they were called to

endure what they did for the cause of truth and righteousness was, that they might in heaven have the higher satisfaction of recounting to us and others what was done through them for the glory of God. Our happiness and theirs would want somewhat of its fulness but for that recital, which will never be exhausted.

That banqueting assembly is not, however, limited to Scripture worthies. It embraces multitudes from subsequent times. There sit Ignatius and Polycarp, Augustine and Chrysostom, Athanasius and Basil. Around that board are gathered the mighty army of Protestant reformers, the chief fathers of New England and Old England, and the renowned champions for truth and holiness from all countries and all centuries of the Christian era. Who will not esteem heaven a more desirable place because John Howe and John Owen are there; because Usher and Leighton, Wesley and Whitfield, Eliot and Brainard are there? Who will not esteem it peculiar happiness to associate with one who discoursed so fully on the Saints' Everlasting Rest, and with one whose sweet strains are sung Sabbath after Sabbath by thousands of assemblies on earth? Who will not be rejoiced at such an interview with that ingenious dreamer who immor-

talized Bedford jail, and whose pilgrim has gone forth over all the earth?

The stars of that firmament, however, are not all of the first magnitude; nor is the surface of the earth made up wholly of mountains. There is far more of undistinguished level. Our religious interests and our heavenly anticipations may not be limited only to those known to fame, any more than to our kindred after the flesh, or our personal acquaintance. There is, indeed, an important sense in which all mankind are our brethren. We speak, to be sure, of heathen nations as benighted. We think of them as removed further from us in moral character than in space. In regard to most of them we understand very imperfectly the depth of their degradation. Comparatively elevated, we are, by this very goodness of God, made in a sense incapable of realizing how corrupt they are. Still, however brutish, they are not brutes. They do not belong to a different species. God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. We talk about the European, the African, and other races, but do they not all belong alike to the human race? Whatever varieties of complexion and social condition there may be, "we are all one man's sons." A family like

ness pervades all. We all stand at an equal remove from him who was expelled from Paradise. Yes, and some of those lowest in the scale, and with fewest social attractions, are called to our Lord's table, in his kingdom. They come in from the highways and hedges. The vast majority of those sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, were comparatively obscure on earth. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests."

And how many will be there? "A great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues." Even in ancient times, and when the church was confined to a single nation, a nation by no means the largest, and at a period of extreme degeneracy, there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. On the single day of Pentecost, three thousand signified their acceptance of the Gospel offer; and the time is predicted when a nation shall be born at once. "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." It is estimated that already within the

Christian era, more than fifty thousand millions of human beings have died. As to how many of these were nominally Christian we attempt no conjecture; nor how many of the latter were really such; but admitting that even of those connected with churches many will, at last, cry "Lord, Lord!" to whom he will reply, "I never knew you;" admitting the proportion of such to be the same as in the original twelve chosen by Christ, or as high, even, as the parable of the virgins may indicate, we must still believe that millions have already passed into glory, and that, when the remainder of the elect shall have been gathered in, the host will be inconceivably great. No want of guests will there be at that marriage supper. We hear of festivals here on earth, where thousands assemble. We read of millions in the army of Xerxes; but the greatest throng ever thus gathered together are only the small dust of the balance to that host which "shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."

Notwithstanding, however, the vastness of that assemblage, individuality is unimpaired. Peter, John and Paul, are, perhaps, as unlike now as when on earth. The identity of Matthew, Mark and Luke, is undisturbed. Apollos and Sylvanus,

Aquila and Priscilla, have lost none of their personality. Jeremiah is as truly Jeremiah as when he was in prison; Elijah as truly Elijah as when he mounted the chariot of fire. No one will ever be merged in another. The number there is not greater than the variety of individual character and experience. All harmonizing, each has a tone of his own in the song of Moses and the Lamb; and if one voice were withdrawn, that glorious anthem would be less perfect than it is. Each guest at that table will furnish something which no one else could, for the instruction and entertainment of every other.

Let it not be once imagined that variety and multitude will there distract. The capacity for social acquaintance and enjoyment must increase proportionately with the general advancement of the soul. Terrestrial analogies favor this supposition. Among the lower tribes the social disposition is, for the most part, measured by their useful or harmless character. The lion and the eagle are not gregarious. And this instinct is not modified by the lapse of time. The bee is no more gregarious now than six thousand years ago. Among men, too, the social appetite is, in a measure, proportionate to mental improvement and moral worth.

Larger societies can exist only where progress has been made in civilization. We read of savage hordes, not empires. It is fair, then, to infer that in heaven the delight and profit of celestial acquaintance will forever increase.

It should be observed, too, that numbers, in the heavenly kingdom, form no bar to homogeneousness.

Their earthly probation finished, all the children of God will be consolidated with angels into one commonwealth. Our earth to-day has no community so widely diffused, so diversified in character, and yet so indissolubly bound together, as the church of Christ. However separated by mountains and oceans, by varieties of climate, by habit, dialect or mental culture, there is an invisible bond of sympathy, which nothing else can imitate. On points of comparative unimportance they may argue; in denominational concerns there may be occasional friction; or from remoteness they may never have heard of one another; still, let the lineaments of the divine image be mutually apparent in any two human beings, they recognize each other at once as brethren. So will it be, only a hundred-fold more marked, in heaven. Jew or Gentile, Ethiopian or Saxon, bond or free, beggar or monarch, in

sackcloth or in ermine, they belong to the same general assembly, they sit side by side at the same table. With one impulse will they sing, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" "As the dew of Hermon, as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." All that is essential in their views and emotions is the same; the process of initiation into Christ's kingdom, and the objects and emotions of worship and enjoyment, are the same. "There is one body and one spirit, as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Professed disciple, do you believe all this? Do you believe that a few days hence, "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption," you will find yourself in the midst of ten thousand times ten thousand saints, joining with all your ransomed powers in the song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive riches, and honor, and power, and glory, and blessing?" Why, then, so absorbed in the society of earth? Why such feeble efforts to persuade others to share these high privileges? Does this evince citizenship in the New Jerusalem; a

wedding garment for that feast? Even if it were so, can you be content that no more should be gathered to that table of high and holy fellowship? Would you monopolize the bliss of heaven? Have you no heart to say to each of the impenitent near you, and to the perishing afar off, Come thou with us, and we will do thee good?

Professed disciple, do you really believe there is a heaven; and that such society is there? Is it your settled expectation to join it? Are you firmly convinced that with your own eyes you are soon to see those patriarchs and apostles, yea, the whole of the redeemed; that with your own ears you are to hear them discourse from the accumulated treasures of their wisdom; aye, side by side to sit down with them, and eye to eye to commune with saints whom scores of centuries have rendered venerable? Do you believe that you will shortly be talking at Christ's table, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; with John, Peter, and Paul; with your former pastors, and Christian friends? Are you truly expecting to see those, now members of the same church with you, in glory? Why then that coldness toward them? Why such constant, or even frequent absence from the place of social prayer? Why, too, so many hard speeches about them? Here is one

with whom you expect to spend eternity ; you think that heaven will be the happier for his presence ; yet do you deal out sarcasm and innuendoes ; or speak in a humorous or censorious strain at the expense of one who equally with yourself belongs to the body of Christ, and is as fair a candidate for a place among the spirits of just men made perfect.

Christian friend, give up evil-speaking, or give up talking about heaven. “By this,” so saith the blessed Saviour, “by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

CHAPTER VIII.

CHILDREN IN HEAVEN.

Who are they whose little feet,
Pacing life's dark journey through,
Now have reached that heavenly seat
They had ever kept in view ?
" I from Greenland's frozen land ;"
" I from India's sultry plain ;"
" I from Afric's barren sand ;"
" I from islands of the main."

" All our earthly journey past,
Every tear and pain gone by,
Here together met at last
At the portals of the sky : .
Each the welcome ' COME ' awaits,
Conquerors over death and sin !"
Lift your heads, ye golden gates,
Let the little travellers in.

EDMENSTON.

" HE is dead ! " The last breath is drawn. A convulsive movement passed through that little frame, and all is still. " He is dead." O, will that sweet smile never come back ? Will those tiny hands never move softly over a mother's face again ? Is the fond father to share in those seasons of glee, those little ecstasies, no more ?

No ; the Lord struck the child, and the rose faded from his cheek, and the lustre from his eye ; his sunny smile has given place to a look of distress, and his sweet carol to sharp cries, fading into feeble moans.

“The Lord struck the child,” and “it was very sick.” All was anxiety in the palace ; servants stepped lightly over the pavements, and moved in silence along the corridors ; the fountain in the court could be heard in the little sufferer’s room, but it brought him small relief. It was unheeded by the weeping father. “David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.” A touching spectacle it was, to see that “man of war,”—he who in youthful prowess smote the lion and the bear, who single-handed laid Goliath in the dust, who had mingled undaunted in so many fierce encounters, and brought home trophies from so many strongholds,—now bowing down under the pressure of domestic grief. God has smitten the child ; he is smiting the father, and in deep contrition David fasts, and weeps, and prays.

The king’s recovery to cheerfulness was as striking as his grief. It marked him as a true penitent, to whom, notwithstanding his sin and shame, the joys of salvation were again restored. Particularly

memorable are the words, "I shall go to him," for they point us to his assurance of the child's salvation, and suggest the inquiry, Where do those go who die in infancy? The question has been variously answered. Some have maintained that they cease to exist, like the beasts that perish. By others, it has been held that a part are saved, and a part are lost; — the Romish and similar corrupt churches affirming that baptized infants alone are saved, the rest being doomed to outer darkness; while a third class teach that all dying in infancy are saved.

It certainly is deserving of remark, that our only authoritative source of information should be so silent on this subject. When we consider the proportion of the human race who are called away at an early period; when we reflect upon the vast amount of parental grief thus awakened, and the silent inquiries which must have arisen in millions of stricken hearts; at first thought it seems strange that Holy Writ should shed no more light on such a question. When, however, we reflect, that the Author of the Bible never steps aside to gratify human curiosity; that the welfare of departed infants is in no way affected by its contents; and that the volume addresses itself wholly to those who are no

longer infants ; the omission ceases to surprise us. But whatever view be taken, it should never be forgotten that the tone of our assertion ought to be modified by the absence of explicit testimony.

Thus much, however, we may affirm positively, that no infants enter heaven on the ground of their own fitness, or because of their entire freedom from moral taint. This cannot be the case, for two reasons : such is not their character ; they all come into the world with a corrupt nature inherited from Adam, — a disposition to evil, which, unchanged, disqualifies for heaven, and will certainly prompt to sin. The word of God, moreover, does not speak of any taken into his presence above, except those who are cleansed by the blood of Christ. All infants, therefore, need the mediation of Christ and the renovation of the Holy Spirit to fit them for that abode of holiness.

It occurs then to ask whether reason or Scripture requires a limitation of the grace of God and the application of the atonement to a part only of those who die in infancy ? For aught that appears, the salvation of all infants would reflect honor upon the attributes of God, and upon the work of the Saviour and Sanctifier ; and the lively oracles, instead of discountenancing, encourage such a belief. Must not

the salvation of all dying so early make it most conspicuously apparent that where sin hath abounded, there grace hath much more abounded? Do any Scripture representations of the world of woe intimate that young children are among the lost?

When, on the other hand, we find David saying so confidently, "I shall go to him;" and again, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength;" when we find our Lord himself quoting this to the chief priests and scribes, as they were annoyed that children should be singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David;" and most of all, when we hear him saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God," we are led to hope, yes, to believe, that all dying in infancy are, through the atonement of the Saviour, and the regenerating power of the Spirit, adopted by the Father into his family above.

Such is now the general belief of Christendom, with the exception of some of its corrupt churches, as the Roman Catholic, whose Council of Trent decrees, "Whosoever shall affirm that baptism is indifferent, that is, not necessary to salvation, let him be accursed;" and whose catechism teaches that "children, be their parents Christians or Infidels,

unless regenerated by the grace of baptism, are born to eternal misery and everlasting destruction."

Much the same was held by Luther, Melancthon, and many other reformers, and had been held for ages, under the lead of Augustine, who was called *Durus pater infantium*, the harsh father of infants. The Puseyitish portion of the Episcopal church still maintains the unscriptural dogma that for the unbaptized there is no admission into heaven.

So far as known, the Swiss reformer, Zwingli, was the first to proclaim the hope that all infants, whether Christian or heathen, who die before they become actual transgressors, are saved by grace. But it was John Calvin, whose name has been so widely and wickedly abused, to whom this attractive doctrine has been most indebted for an able and scriptural vindication. It is men such as Gill and Robert Hall, Toplady and Thomas Scott, firm, outspoken Calvinists, who have done most service to this truth, in opposition to prelatical exclusiveness; for the opposite dogma grows chiefly out of a belief in the indispensable efficacy of the sacrament of baptism. It is not, indeed, the sanction of uninspired names on which we would depend for the support of this, or any other truth; but justice to

this class of theologians required that a wide-spread and persistent slander should be contradicted.

In view of the character of God, the priesthood of Jesus Christ, and the slight intimations of holy writ, we may rest in a comfortable assurance that all departed infants are made spiritually and forever alive; that, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." "There is hope in their end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border." "Moreover, your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it."

Our thoughts mount at once, delightfully and gratefully, to our Father's house, where are many mansions; and we understand better why in that blissful abode there is such an exceeding great multitude, which no man can number. "For of such — of such more numerously than all others — is the kingdom of God." "These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb." It is estimated that, of all born into this world, one half leave it in infancy. If such be the case, then, according to a computation which makes the whole race thus far to number twenty-eight

thousand millions, there would be at this moment fourteen thousand millions in heaven who were infants when they went there. Whatever may be thought of the probable correctness of this estimate, the field thus opened for joyful contemplation is immense, and as enrapturing as immense. How many times must we multiply the present population of our globe to make it equal the host which has already gone to the regions of bliss! How many more will at last be found to be saved than lost! How will the glory of God shine in the recovery by the second Adam, so much more ample than the ruin by the first! How is Satan baffled in his most malicious plans, and our Redeemer divinely victorious!

This triumphant foiling of the prince of darkness has a peculiar charm, when we contemplate, in addition to ordinary early deaths, the cases of those violently destroyed. Let us glance at some of the forms and cruel facts of infanticide. In the massacre of St. Bartholomew, when sixty thousand French Protestants were most inhumanly butchered, no age was spared. Children were involved with parents in a promiscuous destruction. The same has been true in many other massacres instigated or sanctioned by the hierarchy of Rome.

In the Polynesian islands, before the subversion of idolatry, it is estimated that two-thirds of the children were put to death. Missionaries formerly testified that they did not know a mother who had not also been a murderer. We know that there was a similar practice, though to a less extent, among the ancient Arabs, the northern people of Europe, and indeed among nearly all pagan nations.

Sir George Staunton estimates that in the capital of the celestial empire two thousand female children are annually destroyed. Others put the number as high as ten thousand. What, then, must be the whole number of Chinese children, of this sex, who perish every year, from the neglect or violent hands of their unnatural parents? And why is this? Both here, and, in a considerable measure, among other nations also, it proceeds mainly from a diabolical economy — from the wish to save themselves the trouble and expense of rearing children that may cost them more than they will bring when sold in marriage. Rather than abate anything from the rites of their expensive superstition they will murder their own offspring. They destroy an immortal being with less compunction than they tread upon a bit of printed paper.

It appears there is a sect of Hindoos called Raj-

kusna, near Benares, that were in the habit, formerly, of destroying all their female children. Other sects in the same neighborhood were similarly guilty, though to a less extent. The military tribe of Jarejah is represented to have practised the same exterminating infanticide for more than four thousand years. Their wives they procured from other tribes not addicted to this monstrous custom. In the peninsula of Guzerat alone, according to one computation (though, probably, too high), thirty thousand female children perished annually. In the greater part of that region the English have abolished this practice ; yet, strange as it may seem, when they began they were opposed by some of the tribes on the ground of the antiquity of the usage. Is it alleged that these are exceptional cases, met with only where philosophy and civilized legislation are unknown ? — that men of calm reflection, and more tender sensibilities, will not be found countenancing infant murder ? Plato, in his model republic, taught the expediency and lawfulness of exposing children, in certain cases. Aristotle did essentially the same, and other philosophers, too, by their silence, and more than by silence.

Now, it must be thought sufficiently strange that

the dreadful extremity of famine should have led to such results in the siege of Samaria and Jerusalem ; we regard as still more unpardonable the exterminating jealousy of Herod, and the bigoted fury of French and other Papists ; the instances in which this has been sanctioned by legislators, and countenanced by philosophers, appeared, perhaps, to preclude the possibility of anything more strange ; but we have not yet reached the summit of this dreadful climax. Children have been extensively destroyed as an act of religion. This was common among the Canaanitish nations and the Phœnicians. Hence, God repeatedly warned the children of Israel against this, and prohibited it under the severest penalties. “Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God ; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.” Notwithstanding this, in later times the profligate Ahaz burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen. Manasseh, also, caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom. Their idol, Moloch, was of brass, seated on a brazen throne, and adorned with a royal crown. When they offered children to him, they heated the statue intensely hot, and then placed the miserable victim within

the arms, where it was soon consumed, or rolled into a burning furnace at the foot of the statue. The cries of the victims were drowned by the noise of drums and trumpets. Mothers made it a merit and a part of their religion to view this horrid sight without a single sign of grief; and if a tear or a sigh escaped them they supposed the sacrifice less acceptable, if not utterly inefficacious. This savage barbarity was carried to such excess that even mothers endeavored, with embraces and kisses, to hush the cries of their children, in order to propitiate the god. The kings of Tyre, in times of danger, used to sacrifice their sons to appease the anger of their gods; and from them the custom passed to the Carthaginians. In times of pestilence it was their custom to immolate a large number of children. Private persons, desirous of averting any great calamity, took the same method, and such as had no children purchased them of the poor, in order that they might not be deprived of the merit of such a sacrifice. In Peru two hundred children were annually sacrificed for the health of the Inca. At Ganga Sagor, an island in the mouth of the Ganges, hundreds of mothers, during the January festival, formerly used to throw their infants into the turbid waters; and they bewailed

the sacrifice as unpropitious if the sharks did not devour their offspring before their eyes.

What an appalling climax is that through whose gradations of heightening horrors such a detail conducts us ! Murder merely shocks us, but the murder of children is another thing. Revolting enough when starvation is its apology, it is much more so when calculating ambition is the motive. What shall we think of it when the sanctity of law authorizes it, and when grave philosophers encourage it ? One instance alone in all history should have been remembered and wept over, — what, then, are we to say of the wide-spread and habitual practice ? If one demoniac father had done it, the deed should have been whispered, with a faltering tongue, to the end of time ; but mothers, countless mothers, too, have been thus guilty. Yet, the last thrill of horror does not come over us till we reach that worst of all — the superstitious sacrifice of unoffending offspring.

What is the madness that has seized the nations ? What direful spirit has de-humanized such extensive portions of our race ? What is that unseen and deadly agency, that has been at work to turn the brain and cauterize the heart of so many mothers ? Or has the world been peopled by demons

in human form ? Ah ! those unnatural fathers and mothers are of the same descent with ourselves. Those perpetrators of an economical or a religious infanticide are our brethren, members of the same great family. Their heart is no more callous by nature than our own. But Paganism, under the control of Satan, has made them what we see them. That is the madness, the mighty and malign agency, that has nerved them for such deeds.

But glory to God in the highest for the discomfiture herein of the great adversary ! Offered to Moloch, those children, we humbly trust, ascended to Jesus,—from the heated arms of a brazen image to the gentle embrace of Christ in Paradise. “And he took them in his arms, and laid his hands upon them, and blessed them ;” and to the baffled, roaring lion who had sought to devour them, he said, “Of such is the kingdom of God.” Alas, for Herod ! not for the martyrs of Bethlehem ; alas, for persecuting pontiffs and monarchs ! not for their infant victims ; alas, for the mother on the banks of the Ganges ! not for her offspring afloat on its waters ;—alas, for them, that they did not themselves perish in earliest infancy ! “Is it well with the child ? It is well.” “I shall go to him ;” and I shall there find him a cherub, his voice joining

clear and sweet in the choir of heaven ; all his earthly beauty, all his infant loveliness, ripened into the perfected excellence of heaven.

“Look upward, and your child you’ll see,
Fixed in his blest abode;
Who would not, therefore, childless be,
To give a child to God?”

CHAPTER IX.

SOCIETY OF ANGELS.

To our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbed song of pure consent
Aye sung before the sapphire-colored throne,
To him that sits thereon,

With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee,
Where the bright seraphim, in burning row,
Their loud, uplifted angel-trumpets blow ;
And the cherubic host, in thousand choirs,
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly.

MILTON.

SADDUCEAN scepticism has characterized a considerable class in almost every cultivated community. There have always been men of such gross ignorance, such debased morals, or such vain philosophy, as to have either no belief or no interest in things unseen and eternal. Where this indifference is general, many will be found having no distinct idea in regard to the existence of angels. No wonder that all who doubt, or who seldom contemplate, the

government of the Lord of hosts, should more than doubt the existence of his invisible ministers. Just in proportion, however, as we are persuaded of the being and superintendence of the God of Sabaoth, shall we be ready to admit the existence and agency of his exalted servants. As we regard the king, so do we treat the ambassador.

And is not the innumerable company of angels worthy of at least an occasional thought? Is there not, in such an order of intelligences, reason enough why we should give to them a measure of contemplation? They are spirits, unencumbered with such sluggish vehicles as these bodies, but like winds and flames of fire; yea, like the lightning, they dart wherever the will of God points the way. With greater ease and speed than we pass from house to house, they go from world to world. From the most distant and arduous undertakings, moreover, they return unwearied, as they went. Exhaustion, decay, old age, are to them unknown. They are immortalized in an ever-invigorated manhood. But are there not important relations between the people of God who are seeking the Better Land and these his exalted servants? Is there not to be joyful converse between redeemed saints and the countless throng of angels?

If we had no direct authority for it, we might reasonably infer that heaven is an immensely populous place. Our world, insignificant as it is, compared with the rest of the universe, is supplied with an incalculable population. The air and water teem with unnumbered multitudes. But while unaided vision shows us more than we can count, the microscope astonishes us by the new wonders of life which it reveals. Of the human family, for thousands of years, millions on millions have successively passed to the grave. Is, then, this world so replete with animate existences, and shall there be solitudes in the celestial world? If, as is likely, angels are the commissioned agents of Jehovah, in all parts of the universe, what must be the number of that host who are scattered abroad among worlds so numerous as to baffle all calculation? Who shall undertake the census? The Bible fully confirms the intimations of analogy. "The host of heaven," "the multitude of the heavenly host," are spoken of. When the Psalmist declares, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels;" when to Judas and his company the Saviour intimated that "more than twelve legions of angels" were at his bidding; when Daniel saw the Ancient of Days, and that "thousand thousands ministered

unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him ;” and when, in the Apocalypse, John beheld the same, — they employed a high specific number for one indefinitely great ; and the expressions, in each instance, are tantamount to “an innumerable company of angels.” Though only two individual names — Michael and Gabriel — are mentioned in the Bible, we shall doubtless, in due time, hear the whole catalogue, the almost countless roll of the celestial army. And will not acquaintance with such a multitude furnish ennobling occupation for everlasting ages ?

The gradation that is everywhere observable in our world would lead us also to infer the same in heaven. In the vegetable kingdom there are obvious traces of it. In the animal kingdom, commencing with the lowest specimen of organization, we trace, without interruption, an ascending scale, till we come to that body which is “fearfully and wonderfully made.” And what is human society but an adjustment of classes, varying extremely in position and influence ? It is not to be supposed, then, that in a community so vast as that of angels there should be no subordination of rank, and no important differences in intelligence and moral worth. All known phenomena, which can be re-

garded as furnishing any analogy, lead us to suppose that there is an unbroken gradation, from the humblest member of that society, through rank after rank, inconceivably various, and evermore rising to the head of created intelligences — that lofty position being occupied by the archangel, who stands nearest the throne, the prime minister of Jehovah.

Scripture intimates that such is the case in the celestial hierarchy. We read of “thrones, dominions, principalities, and authorities,” in the heavens. The angel which appeared to Zacharias said, “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God.” Michael is called “one of the chief princes,” — “the great prince.” We read, too, of “Michael and his angels,” which implies subordination. We gather, therefore, that among angels there are different classes, and different degrees of authority and importance of station. Now, what must be the effect of association with an order of beings so diversified, numerous, pure, and exalted? What must result from the interaction of all the faculties of the soul, under such varied and powerful influences? — what but the most rapid advancement in knowledge, holiness, and bliss?

And what are the subjects of converse between angels and saints in glory? In part, we may be

lieve, the great epochs in the divine administration. Angels had, as we apprehend, not only an antediluvian, but an ante-mundane existence, and hence may have much to relate of what took place before God breathed into man the breath of life. But certain we are that, when the foundations of the earth were fastened, and the corner-stone thereof laid, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." From eternity this quarter, at least, of the universe had been a waste; and those celestial couriers may relate to us how, in passing and repassing it, they had been cheered by no traces of divine power and wisdom; and how, upon a sudden, God spake the creating word, and there sprang up a system, most attractive for its order and beauty; and they, the delighted spectators, gave forth a shout of praise. As the greater and lesser lights assumed their posts, as the earth began to revolve and exhibit its diversified scenes of land and water, of rugged hill and fruitful vale, the angels saw that a new tract of space, before desolate, was now replete with the displays of the glory of God. A new field of study was opened before them. To watch the motions, to trace the design and adaptation of the various parts, furnished new material for

thought and holy admiration, — all which we may hear rehearsed in order, mingled with the notes of that song with which they hailed the morning of creation.

Four thousand years later, there was another occasion of angelic jubilee connected with our world; and will they not tell us how they felt, when, upon the announcement of Immanuel's advent, a multitude of their heavenly host sang praises to God in the highest? Will they not repeat to us with what increasing admiration they had become more and more familiar with the great design for which this world was made; and how their wonder heightened as they saw the new dispensation open, and beheld the life and crucifixion of the incarnate Son, — an event to which even the annals of heaven afford no parallel?

But there is one event, common to all times, and restricted to no country, which affords delight to the angels in heaven, and concerning which there will doubtless be abundant converse between them and their fellow-citizens from earth. And what is it that fills with joy, not merely a detachment, while reconnoitering some occurrence on earth, but the entire host in heaven itself? Is it the discovery of a new continent, or of treasures in the depths

of the earth? Is it the news that one army has overwhelmed another? Do they have illuminations in heaven when one portion of the human family succeeds in slaughtering another? Is it the coronation of a monarch, the inauguration of a president?—the anniversary of national freedom?—a new triumph of science or art? What is it, of all the pageants or gala days of earth, that is simultaneously observed in heaven? “I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” That is the grand discovery, the victory, the acquisition, which calls for a jubilee. It is the birthday of an immortal spirit, — the day which ushers a bondman of Satan into the kingdom of God, constituting him heir to a crown of glory and an everlasting inheritance. In the circumstances attending that event, and the results that follow, how exhaustless the themes of discourse, as they shall recount to each one of the multitude, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, more than he ever knew before! And how will the everlasting tide of bliss go on, swelling higher as the original joy wherewith they rejoiced over each is renewed and augmented at every such recital! Time would fail to speak of the angelic narratives of friendly interpositions in

behalf of God's children on earth. Such attendance must prepare the way for a peculiarly intimate and joyful fellowship. If they are sent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation ; if, in visiting earth, some have showed themselves in visions and dreams, as to Jacob and Zachariah, to Joseph and Cornelius ; if, also, they have presented themselves to others whose senses were completely awake ; if, as a convoy, they bear departing spirits to Abraham's bosom, are we not more than authorized to believe that there is intercourse between them and departed spirits in the New Jerusalem ? That city is their peculiar residence. As swift messengers, they indeed traverse the vast empire of Jehovah ; as temporary watchmen, they linger on the outposts of his dominion ; yet heaven is their home. There is the food of angels. There is the centre of that family to which they belong, and with whose members they will doubtless be associated, when God shall have gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth.

And with what satisfaction will saints find themselves united with that holy community, forever associating with principalities and powers, — with cherubim and seraphim, with the archangel, before

the throne ! It was not easy to estimate the joy of those who on earth experienced the friendly interpositions of angels encamped round about them. Such joy was that of the only pious family in Sodom, when rescued from the fiery storm which overwhelmed the cities of the plain ; by Abraham, when pointed to a substitute for his son on the altar ; by the famishing Elijah, when furnished with food ; by Daniel, in his preservation, and by the apostles, in their miraculous deliverances. Often have angels afforded present aid and given assurances of future blessings. Many a mother, like Mary and Elizabeth, could testify to this. Thrice was the husband of Mary, under trying circumstances, directed by a heavenly messenger what to do. Angels were present to moderate the surprise of the early visitors at the sepulchre ; and in the midst of the storm, an angel stood by Paul, to cheer and strengthen him. With what joy, then, will these individuals recognize their deliverers in glory ! And even if every believer has not a special guardian angel, may we not suppose that each will long to know to what angel, in what ways, and at what times, he has been indebted for succor ? -- yea, to know all that heavenly army, and to hear, from their own lips, by what means and with

what emotions they served and observed the church on earth ?

How will growth in knowledge thus be promoted ! We would beware of ascribing to angels a degree of intelligence that shall rival omniscience, yet when such intellects, with memories that are never treacherous, with imaginations that never beguile, with judgments never prejudiced, and into which no fallacies intrude ; when such intellects have expanded age after age, to what gigantic dimensions must they reach ! What treasures of learning, to us inconceivable, must those sleepless students have amassed ! Fatigue they know not. All eye, all ear, century after century they range through the universe. Never detained to acquire new languages ; never disheartened by misapplied labor ; never retarded by sickness, poverty, or incompetent instruction, they observe and ponder, they analyze and discuss, with unerring acumen and immortal energy. And their stores are forever safe. Old age cannot touch them ; fire never reaches the city of God. In such society, with such instructors, what must be the progress of the redeemed in glory !

A like advantage must also be realized in moral excellence. The studies and occupations of angels tend to confirm their obedience, and to increase their

attainments in holiness. Are Christians exhorted to consider the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever? Are they exhorted to this as a means of enlarging their spiritual knowledge, and invigorating their love of virtue? And were angels intimately acquainted with that same being, long before his incarnation, to no purpose? Did they minister to him, while he tabernacled in the flesh; did they attend him back to their abode; have they since been bathing in the beams of his glory, and have they imbibed no holy ardor, no celestial vigor? Have not their errands to this world indicated a profound loyalty to their King, and at the same time been fitted to increase it, however profound before? From every mission of mercy or of judgment they have brought back a more intense zeal in his service. Unsullied by contact with our polluted race, uncontaminated by wickedness witnessed here, with increased alacrity have they spread their wings for heaven. The body of death has never encumbered them. Carnal desires have had no lodgment in their hearts. There was no need that they should be washed in the fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; but they have bathed for ages in the river of the water of life, clear as crystal.

What then, must be the influence of such society upon the spirits of just men made perfect ? O, how ennobling, how sanctifying ! Yes, though solitary and downcast now, the believing wanderers of earth shall soon be ushered into the society of such exalted beings. Those sublime theologians will be our companions. Those celestial spirits, who have drank at no earthly springs, but at the fountain of eternal truth, will be our associates in the holy converse and the deep studies of eternity.

There, too, is a family in which are no discords, a community in which are no feuds, a subordination of ranks, among whom is no envy and no arrogance ; a community pervaded by one spirit, governed by one law, joyfully submissive to one Master ; where avarice and ambition, plotting and counterplotting, are unknown. There, angelic friendships never cool ; nor does hypocrisy plunder the wardrobe of heaven to show herself among cherubim. And what an absence of vanity among those shining ranks ! Seraphim hide their faces with their wings. All are humble, fit subjects of a King who is meek and lowly in heart.

The present ministration of angels to Christian pilgrims establishes a relation of the deepest interest. The particular ways and instances of their special

efforts as our allies, we know not, nor do we need to know. It is enough for us to be assured that an immense host of these efficient guardians are in attendance upon the heirs of salvation. Dwelling as we do in this tabernacle of flesh, burdened with infirmities, assailed by temptations, what consolation it is to know that there is sympathy for us, and co-operation with us, in the world of spirits! Let us never forget, that while we have to contend, not only with indwelling sin, and the dangerous influences of surrounding scenes, but also to wrestle with principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places, still they that be with us are more than they that be with them. If, as to the young man with the prophet, a view were granted us into the surrounding sphere of spiritual being, or if the vision of faith were sufficiently clarified and enlarged, we too should see "the mountains full of horses and chariots of fire round about." Verily, the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Nor are low and lowly Christians overlooked by these ministering spirits. It has not been merely to the noble and learned of earth that they have made their most signal manifestations, but also to the out-

cast bondwoman, to the houseless prophet, to ignorant shepherds, and imprisoned fishermen. Gold, purple, ermine, and rags, and outward wretchedness, are all one in their eyes. "Take heed," said Christ, "that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." The most obscure of God's people on earth share in the sympathy of angels in yonder world of light, who stand in the presence of the King of kings. What ground of humble exultation is here ; and what pitiable arrogance for any to despise them !

"I have seen angels by the sick one's pillow ;
Theirs was the soft tone and the soundless tread ;
When smitten hearts were drooping like the willow,
They stood 'between the living and the dead.'

"There have been angels in the gloomy prison ;
In crowded halls ; by the lone widow's hearth ;
And when they passed, the fallen have uprisen —
The giddy paused — the mourner's hope had birth."

"O, everlasting God ! who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order ; grant that as thy holy angels always do

thy service in heaven, so, by thy appointment, they may succor and defend us on earth ! ”

At the hour of death their services are eminently enjoyed. Dying seems ordinarily so much like passing suddenly into the dark, like plunging into an unfathomed sea, that the soul shrinks, and longs for some hand to guide and uphold it. The thought of going alone into those untried scenes not unfrequently occasions trembling. But it does not go alone. Angels are, as Tertullian calls them, *Evocatores animarum*.

“ Hark, they whisper, — angels say,
Sister spirit, come away ! ”

They who have ministered unseen, now become visible guards. The departing soul is borne to its everlasting rest by the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof. “ It came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” Yes, Lazarus, without fortune, without friends, without home, without clothing, without food, exposed in the open air, and covered with sores, — Lazarus, whom a moment before the meanest servant of the rich man held in contempt, blessing his stars that he was not so forlorn and

wretched ; he, whom a moment before none but dogs cared for, is now carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. A vast convoy of mighty, holy shining ones bear that despised beggar's soul high up in the Paradise of God.

What, then, if, in the closing scene, you feel as solitary and friendless as he who was laid at the gate of Dives ? Think of the waiting crowd, into whose friendly presence and kind ministrations death will introduce you. Gently will they bear you in their arms to your Father's house. Familiarize yourself with this animating thought. In the midst of deep contemplation on his death-bed, Richard Hooker remarked : " I am meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven ; and, O, that it might be so on earth ! " " Now, angels," said an early pastor of New England, when dying, " now, angels, do your office ; " while Dr. Bateman exclaimed, " What glory ! the angels are waiting for me ! Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ! Farewell ! "

When, reader, your face shall be toward Padan-Aram, and you light upon a certain place to tarry there all night, and, with the stones thereof for your

pillow, you lie down in that place to sleep, may you behold the angels of God ascending and descending between heaven and earth ! You will find it none other but the house of God ; it will be the gate of heaven.

CHAPTER X.

SOCIETY OF THE SAVIOUR.

To Jesus, the crown of my hope,
My soul is in haste to be gone ;
O, bear me, ye cherubim, up,
And waft me away to his throne !

My Saviour, whom absent, I love ;
Whom, not having seen, I adore ;
Whose name is exalted above
All glory, dominion, and power ;

When that happy era begins,
When arrayed in thy glories I shine,
Nor grieve any more, by my sins,
The bosom on which I recline, —

O, then shall the veil be removed,
And round me thy brightness be poured ;
I shall meet him, whom absent, I loved ;
I shall see him, whom unseen, I adored !

COWPER

A TWO-FOLD curtain hides heaven from our view, the curtain which separates the present from the future, and that which separates the world we now live in from the world of spirits. Yet fain would we pierce that screen. Fain would we know the

location and features of the Better Land. Fain would we find a telescope able to reveal to us the heavenly Jerusalem. Fain would we catch a glimpse of that particular mansion which we shall occupy. How shall I feel when disembodied? With what emotions shall I bid farewell to this earthly house of my tabernacle, when first its windows are darkened, and its door shut behind me? With what emotions shall I join the convoy of angels, pass the gate of pearl, and along the pavement of gold, up to the great white throne? With what eyes shall I look round upon that city of my God? With what ears shall I hear the harpers harping with their harps? Most of all, with what rapturous intensity, with what seraphic calmness, will the first glance and the protracted gaze be directed to Him that sitteth on the throne?

The most important view of the happiness of heaven has respect to the relations there between Christ and his people. And the question arises, Will there be a personal fellowship between the Great Redeemer and our glorified spirits? The intimations of God's word are, that in the Better Land there will be intimate communion between Christ and its redeemed inhabitants. The Holy Scriptures reveal but little concerning the mode and conditions of future exist-

ence ; concerning the nature of spiritual bodies, our relations to space, and to other intelligences, the character of our perceptions, and the details of our employments. The Holy Spirit enters into no specifications concerning a thousand points on which we might love to speculate. And wisely kind is that silence. Our highest present good does not depend upon an intimate acquaintance with the physiology, psychology, or political economy of Paradise. The requisite for admission to that higher department is not a diploma from the schools of speculative science. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, or what we shall do ; saving that general hints are thrown out, on which we may lawfully enlarge for our own spiritual comfort and the present glory of divine grace.

Inquiring after testimony on this point, we go first of all to our Lord himself. Let us listen to him in the solemn act of supplication : "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." This verse is the last petition in our Saviour's memorable intercessory prayer ; and this closing request is for the future blessedness of believers. How, then, does our Lord speak of the heavenly state ? What intimation does he furnish in regard to its nature ? Does he pray that those given

him by the Father may have exemption from the trials of earth? — that they may repose under celestial bowers, beside the river of life, amusing themselves with study or recreation, as their tastes incline? Is there any hint here that sensual or social epicureanism is to be looked for in the Paradise of God? that there is there fitted up, as some imagine, an intellectual palæstra, or an academy of the arts? How does he who was on the eve of departure to prepare a place for his followers express himself? “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, *be with me where I am*, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.” To come personally into his presence, and enjoy a vision of his glory, is the heaven which he supplicates for his disciples. A few chapters preceding, we read, “And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” And, still earlier, “Where I am there shall my servant be.” Christ would cheer the hearts of his troubled disciples by assuring them of a future residence with himself. All that he needed to say to his penitent companion in crucifixion was, “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” Such is our Lord’s description of heaven, — being with him

And what did his early disciples understand by this? What meaning can it convey to us, if not the idea of personal fellowship with him?

What else, too, does he design by the imagery of a banquet, when he gives the assurance, "that ye may eat and drink *at my table* in my kingdom"? And while the eucharist is a memorial of the past, is it not also a type of the future? "I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Is not the same, moreover, implied in the salutation of the final judgment, "Come, ye blessed of my Father?"

Let us inquire of Paul what his idea of heaven is, and he answers, "To be with Christ," "To be present with the Lord," "To be ever with the Lord." We ask the beloved disciple what he actually saw and heard, and he gives the response of one of the elders: "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." From all which we learn that the presence of Christ in the New Jerusalem is the essence of its glory and bliss, and that the gathering of saints around him is that

they may have perfected fellowship with the Father and the Son. The fact, therefore, of such personal intercourse between him and them is fully established.

It will confirm this, and enhance our anticipations of the delight of such fellowship, if we bear in mind that his identity is unimpaired. The same Saviour who appeared on earth, — the Lamb, to whom sinners were invited to look, — is the Lamb in the midst of the throne on high, who shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters. In the constitution of his person he remains unchanged, and as fully adapted for society with his disciples as when he was on earth. Was a human form required here? It is possessed there. The resurrection-body of our Lord — that with which the disciples saw him taken up into heaven, that with which we shall see him come again in like manner — is the one which the redeemed will behold in heaven, and in which he will commune with them forever. It was in that same form that he was first gazed upon at Bethlehem, that he traversed Palestine, that he walked upon the sea, that he entered Jerusalem. It is the same body on the throne — changed only so far as the circumstances of heaven may demand — which once thirsted under

the heat of noon-day at Shechem, and felt the chill of midnight on the mountain's brow; that sweat blood in Gethsemane, received stripes in the judgment hall, bore the cross towards Calvary, and, at last, died thereon.

But it is glorious mainly as the residence of Immanuel. He it is who is the image of the invisible God, the express image of his person, the brightness of the Father's glory. As on earth, so in heaven, he is the only visible representative of Deity. Philip said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jesus replied, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Was God manifest in the flesh the "mystery of godliness?" Did the fullness of the Godhead then "dwell in him bodily"? The same is he in heaven, only all this is more gloriously exhibited. His person combines such an amplitude of majesty and meekness, such a conjunction of all divine attributes with all that is winning in a perfected humanity, that saints and angels may ponder thereon, and adore forever. No degree, no period of intimacy, can abate their feelings of wonder and delight. On the other hand, all this will be enjoyed, notwithstanding the disparity between him and glorified believers. True he is king, and therefore infinitely exalted. While

glorious in his person, he is also glorious in his dominion. No less on that throne than as the man of sorrows is he the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. "All power has been given unto him in heaven and in earth. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The decree, Let all the angels of God worship him, has never been reversed. Yet as his Godhead, during his sojourn on earth, did not make him any less truly man, any less suited to the freest fellowship with man, so neither does that eternal revelation of the same Godhead in heaven.

Nor does the fact that his supremacy has a punitive element interfere with such communion. Revelation assures us that it is not alone in his mild regency over the hosts of heaven that he will be known as king. He has already spoiled the principalities and powers of darkness. And when the mighty struggle between his kingdom and that of Satan shall issue in the utter overthrow of the arch-apostate, his sway

ever the nether world will be yet more signally disclosed. In view of it, saints will sing, Hallelujah! "He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, — King of kings and Lord of lords. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and on his head are many crowns. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." What! is this the character of him who reigns in heaven? What means such a picture of awful vengeance? He who is enthroned on Zion is styled the Prince of Peace. Is he not the good Shepherd, tender and benignant? Ay, in that heart are unfathomable depths of tenderness. But do those taught of God need to be told that justice is an attribute as indispensable and as desirable, too, as mercy? Do they need to be told that if, after all he has done and suffered, his enemies will not bow before him, it is right, infinitely right, that they should feel the force of his justice? It is John, the tender-hearted, who bears witness so fully to the amiability of Immanuel, who also bears witness that "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he may smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The shining ones on high will

recognize him as Lord over the regions of darkness, and with boundless complacency will they do it. Not one particle will remain of present unholy sympathy with crime, or morbid reluctance to see the glorious majesty of that law maintained.

The grand aim of this holy intercourse is adoring acquaintance with Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and grace. This ennobling study attracts all who are divinely taught. The manifestation of the Godhead in Christ Jesus is the one plan of eternity. All divine arrangements are subordinate to that. By it all the developments of creation, providence, and prophecy, are harmonized. While its Alpha lies hid among the glories of past eternity, its Omega will never be fully disclosed by the increasing splendors of an endless future. This is the one cherished design of the Ancient of Days, which absorbs all others. Before the foundation of the world was it declared, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." In mutual council, the eternal Son was constituted head of a kingdom whose history takes in the dispensations of time and of eternity, and whose glorious court is the Mount Zion above.

But the fellowship of the redeemed with Christ in heaven will be glorious for another reason. He

it is in whom they had chosen before the foundation of the world ; he, of whom it was announced so early that he should bruise the serpent's head ; who in every sacrifice was shadowed forth as the atoning Messiah ; yea, who in the everlasting covenant was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, till, in the fulness of time, he bore our sins in his own body on the tree ; — he, as the Lord our Righteousness, is to fill every eye and heart in heaven. Full of meaning was the herald's proclamation, " Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world ! " But far more of import is there in the new song, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Because Christ was made a curse for us ; because he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities ; because he honored the law, vanquished Satan, and ascended to be our advocate ; because he is the vine and we are the branches, and no one is able to pluck us out of his hand ; therefore, do the redeemed say, are we here. " Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Of all the thousand thousand occupants of heaven, not

one is there for any other reason than because Christ, having loved his own, loved them to the end, and is the sole, the all-sufficient Saviour. Those hosts, animated by the same feeling, joining in one song, only because there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, are and ever will be before the throne. Beyond all doubt, He who sitteth on the throne, and dwells among them, delights, most of all, to speak of this his highest office. Eternity will not exhaust the theme. Its farthest age will only reveal wonders in it never known before.

In heaven alone can there exist anything like a full appreciation of Christ's redeeming work. True, all that is necessary to our present condition, or appropriate to our present capacities, may now be apprehended. Much may be known of the Saviour by the prayerful study of his life, as recorded in his word. Much may be enjoyed when his body and blood are set forth at his table. How much more than tongue can tell may be learned and enjoyed when the promised Comforter teaches all things, and brings all things to remembrance ! Yet, after all, we now know but in part—we see only through a glass, darkly ; then, it will be face to face. If even here, so far from the abode of

blessedness, God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, what will be the fullness of effulgence in that city where there is no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God is the light thereof? That is a light whose orb never sinks beneath the celestial horizon, and which is sevenfold brighter than the sun. If Peter thought it was good to linger on the mount of transfiguration, how will he and all the saints feel on the Mount Zion above, over which no cloud settles, and from which they never descend? If the same apostle could affirm, "In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" what will be his and our joy when we do see him as he is, and he shall talk with us as a man talketh with his friend? Unspeakable and full of glory now, whose tongue can tell what it will be then? All that need be said, is, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Of this we are sure, when death shall introduce to the immediate fellowship of Him who suffered on Calvary, it will be found the half had not been told us. A

few moments' conversation with him will reveal more of his personal excellence, more of the deep things of redemption, than is gained by all the study of earth.

Every one is familiar with the story of the first convert in Greenland. "How was that?" he inquired, as the missionary read the history of Christ's sufferings, "How was that? tell me that once more." Never does that rehearsal grow tiresome to the believer on his way to heaven, and when the disembodied spirit enjoys its first glimpse of the Lamb that was slain, and drinks in the first notes of the song of Moses and the Lamb, its feeling must be, "What is that? tell me that once more." And as the charm which invests the Redeemer entrances the soul more and more deeply at every advanced stage of heavenly knowledge, it may still renew the same exclamation.

Personal converse is essential to completeness of social enjoyment — to the more refined and higher immunities of friendship. The human soul is made to demand, especially when renewed, an intimacy with a more perfect friend than earth affords. In familiar acquaintance you may presently explore any man, and then you find yourself longing for a friend more worthy of your friendship. Now there

is one, and only one, who can meet this unsatisfied demand. It is he who is divine, and yet a man. It is he who calls his followers not servants but friends. What was his last domestic act on earth, but to wash his disciples' feet? — intimating that, as the period of his exaltation approached, there was no change, but only a freer manifestation of his tender regard, and a desire that their last associations of him in private life might be the most familiar and endearing. The Romish intervention of saints and the Virgin between the brethren on earth and the Brother in heaven, is a cruel dishonor to Christ's condescending tenderness now; but in the New Jerusalem, where we are to see him face to face, it would be a yet more disheartening barrier.

In heaven Christ will commune immediately with us. O, what rapture will that be! Happy were the wise men when they found him at Bethlehem; happy was grayheaded Simeon when he saw him in the temple; happy the woman with whom he talked at Jacob's well; happy his own mother as she sat at his feet; happy the disciples whose hearts burned as he talked with them by the way; happy the whole brotherhood, when he came suddenly into the midst of them, with his heavenly "Peace be with you;" but all those were faint

foretastes of the intimacy of heaven. To stand side by side with the Lord Jesus ; to walk with him in light ; ay, to lean where the beloved disciple leaned — that, that is heaven.

At a feast given to the chief officers of his army Cyrus presented to some of them costly gifts — to one a splendid garment, to another a golden cup ; but Chrysantas, his favorite friend, he merely drew to himself, and kissed him. All of Christ's followers are bidden to the banquet of heaven ; with his own lips has he declared, "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." Not the white robe, not the harp or the crown of gold, is most thought of there ; but the privilege of each to sit with him on his throne, and eat with him at his table ; to hear from his own mouth the gracious assurances of his love.

Hence, there will be complete assimilation to him. "When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Romish legends rehearse that the Virgin, and that Christ himself, has appeared sensibly to certain saints, and impressed marks — *stigmata* — indelibly upon their persons. Far more valuable and lasting are Christ's actual manifestations of himself to the souls of believers, and the impress which he leaves there

upon them. "It does a man good," was the remark of a distinguished European, after an introduction to his sovereign, "it does a man good to have an interview with a king." Yes; and it does a man good to have an interview with the King of kings; to talk with him face to face, as a man talketh with his friend. It does one good to have an interview with him, who, notwithstanding his royalty, is a man, — one who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. It does a man good to draw nigh, in full assurance of faith. It has an elevating effect upon him; he will not only be more loyal, but will carry away with him somewhat of dignified regal bearing itself.

"We know that hereafter we shall be like him." Here the ravages of leprosy may be stayed, but the scars not all effaced. Perfect soundness, complete freedom from blemish, will not be realized till "the Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." It might seem enough, at first thought, that we are to be like angels. But no; that will not satisfy a soul which strives to be perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. "We know that we shall be like him,—

for we shall see him as he is." A special transforming power is ascribed to that view of Christ, and communion with him, which saints enjoy in heaven. Among men nothing is more common than to remark the formative influence which a person of commanding talents or position exerts upon others. The biographies of such men in turn, and one's favorite authors, sway our views and feelings by a power scarcely less marked. Alexander the Great always had a copy of Homer under his pillow. Cæsar, meeting with a statue of Alexander, was fired with an ambition he had never known before ; Aristotle, by his writings, ruled over more thousands than his royal pupil subdued ; and while the kingdom of Macedon survived only a few years, that of the philosopher maintains to this day a foothold in the world. By the force of his talents and scholarship Sir William Jones could infuse a literary spirit into the agents of a grasping commercial company. Tell me with whom you go, and I will tell you what you are. Such is man's social constitution, that his sentiments, language and deportment, will be formed, partially or entirely, by his associates, whoever they are. Seneca recommended to a friend to represent to himself Socrates, Cato, or some other distinguished worthy, as a con

stant observer of his actions. He suggests this as an excellent method for reforming a man's life, and rendering him eminently virtuous. There was reason in it. What, then, must be the assimilating power of the divine presence, when, by no fiction of the fancy, but in immediate vision, we come before the King of kings? How must the enrapturing glories of his person and converse mould the soul into harmony with his own! Even a glimpse of his loveliness must fascinate the beholder. The very clod beneath the rose-bush imbibes a perfume. You cannot walk through Oriental groves without bearing away somewhat of their precious aroma; and can one walk in the paradise of God, and imbibe no fragrance? The ancients speak of a stream of which if a creature drank it turned to a pure white. It is fabled, too, that there is a stream,

“Where the leaves that fall,
 'Neath the autumn sky,
Grow gem-like all,
 And never die.”

Is there no virtue in the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb? Is there no blessed influence in the atmosphere of heaven? With what

a mighty transforming power must the special presence of Him who is glorious in holiness be felt round about the throne ! If the face of Moses shone as it had been the face of an angel, what will be the lustre of a countenance, on which in heaven those vital beams pour in a ceaseless and benignant stream ! Then, as not before, will it be true, “Ye were sometimes darkness ; but now are ye light in the Lord ;” and when the gracious influences of heaven shall have brought the heart into perfect conformity to God, then will it be announced, with a meaning not now understood : “Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.”

It will not then be through ordinances ; not through shadows, like smoke of incense ; not by symbols, like the pillar of cloud and of fire, or the light from between the cherubim ; through no glass darkly, will Christ there be seen, but face to face. Not merely reflected rays, such as now shine upon us, can there be endured ; but the inner eye will be strengthened to receive directly the concentrated beams of that effulgence. Not by tiresome study, not with a painful gaze in the dimness of twilight, but with clearest insight will believers exultingly contemplate the Lamb that dwells among them.

The knowledge thus acquired will be peculiarly full and comprehensive. In the present state, it is but a copy we behold, not the original. Much as we may learn, still we say, "Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself!" Even the means by which he reveals himself are means of eclipse. But as when the sun, arising upon a cloudless sky, illuminates the whole hemisphere, so will the believer find the world of blessedness; only the light thereof will be as the light of the sun seven-fold. Christ will then seem all in all.

There was one Eudoxus, who longed to approach the sun near enough to have a full view of that glorious body, even though it should consume him. What is the strength of our aspirations to behold the Sun of righteousness? Do we long for that fuller view which shall so irradiate and transform the soul? While, then, we remain on earth, let us be often at the mount of glory; and, see to it, that in the structure of character, "thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in that mount."

CHAPTER XI.

HEAVENLY HONOR AND RICHES.

O, change! O, wondrous change!
Burst are the prison bars!
This moment there — so low
In mortal prayer — and now
Beyond the stars!

O, change! Stupendous change
Here lies the senseless clod;
The soul from bondage breaks,
The new immortal wakes —
Awakes with God!

C. BOWLES.

THE close relationship of things apparently different is one of the most striking facts in nature. No two substances are to the eye more unlike, or in their elements more similar, than charcoal and the diamond. Wandering along the beach, how little do we think that the sand beneath our feet enters so largely into the composition of the splendid vase, or the humbler but still elegant utensils upon our table, that, clarified and combined with other substances, it forms the crystal ceiling of palaces, dazzling and

enchanting assembled throngs; or that to the eye of the astronomer it reveals countless wonders in the heavens! The caterpillar erects for itself a mausoleum of clay; but that tomb of a disgusting worm is the cradle of a most beautiful insect. So is it, only in an immeasurably higher degree, with the people of God. Imperfect, rude, unsightly as they may now seem — much as they may undergo in the crucible of affliction — “I reckon,” says Paul, resorting to his sanctified arithmetic, “that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

That glory is a manifestation to and also by the saints in heaven. They are at once recipients and exponents. In becoming illuminated, they reflect the light of life.

The glory revealed in them is the eminence of their holiness and happiness. To be at once elevated to a high degree of moral worth and spiritual joy, and to be forever advancing in the same, constitute the bliss to which they are translated from present sin and suffering. If the word of God were silent on the subject; if there could be found nothing positive concerning the bliss of heaven, analogy might lead us to infer that it would be exceeding great. Assuming the present dispensation of God's

favours as the standard of his benevolence, what may we reasonably expect when this mixed condition of things shall cease — when the tares shall have been gathered out from the wheat, and when God's own chosen people shall all have been gathered home to heaven? Dispensing his providential bounties now according to a general system, which has comparatively little reference to moral character, he deals out favours with open hand to Infidels and Pagans; to the rejected house of Israel, and the fierce descendants of Ishmael; to the millions of idolaters in Eastern Asia, and to the multitudes of nominal Christians the world over. While, on the one hand, ten righteous men would have saved Sodom, and a handful of praying ones have saved many a city and country from destruction; on the other, one Achan has often troubled the whole camp, and brought down plagues upon an entire community.

Now, when the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; when nothing shall longer prevent the displays of divine munificence, — no personal demerit of saints, or anything in their social relations, — what glory will be revealed in them!

But there is something more certain than conjec-

ture. Inspiration speaks of "A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:" a weight of glory; an exceeding weight of glory; yes, a far more than hyperbolical weight of glory. Let hyperbole be piled upon hyperbole, the language of earth can never convey that inexpressible weight of future glory. It is called "so great salvation," and reference is made not only to the exalted character of the Saviour, and the magnitude of those displays which attended his mission, but also to results, future as well as present, in the experience of all saints. Partly, at least, on this account, is it called "a great salvation." But how great, is not and cannot be told. The sacred writer leaves it, saying, "*so great salvation.*" Glorious things are indeed spoken concerning Zion, the city of our God. Again: "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." It is not only liberty, but glorious liberty. There will be complete emancipation from the bondage of sin and Satan, the flesh and the world. And this deliverance of the children of God is so illustrious that the whole irrational world is represented as looking anxiously for it, as to the grand consummation of all its wishes.

The creature having been made subject to vanity, not willingly, but on account of man's transgression, great, indeed, must be the revelation of glory in the saints, when, along with their own deliverance, comes the emancipation of the whole irrational creation. Taken either literally or figuratively, all Scripture representations teach that the future manifestation of the sons of God will be superlative in glory.

We read of "the riches of the glory of that inheritance;" the elders having crowns of gold upon their heads, golden vials full of odors, and all in the New Jerusalem having harps of gold. Yea, the city itself is pure gold, even the streets thereof.

The admirable qualities of this metal entitle it to a high rank, and with peculiar propriety it is employed to represent the glory of Paradise. It is capable of an unrivalled superficial expansion. By its singular tractility it can be made to assume any form desired. No common solvents act upon it. In the hands of the jeweller, the embroiderer or the gilder, it takes a thousand useful and pleasing shapes. And then, in the great marts of the world, it has been in all ages the representative of property — the standard of value. How eager has been the search for it, from the discovery of Ophir,

to that of California and Australia ! “ Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it.” The refiner’s fire brings out the idolized mammon, and the ready multitude pay their homage. Poetry and popular speech have made it synonymous with everything rich and beautiful. The ripened harvest is golden ; the sun, at his morning advent, pours “ fluid gold ” over mountain and valley.

Can anything be more valuable than gold ? Yes, the faith of the believer. Gold perisheth. It may be tarnished ; it may be dissipated in vapor. But the trial of faith is much more precious than of gold that perisheth ; the results of spiritual refining being incomparably superior to those of any process undergone by the precious metals. All things terrestrial, however valuable, grow dim in the splendor of the Christian’s heaven. And the treasures there laid up are acquired here. They are subjective, not objective ; personal, not relative ; laid up within, not hoarded without. They are the entire product of God’s gracious operation on the soul — the total result of his purifying process, carried on in the regenerated heart. Those treasures ever increase in value. Even here they suffer no permanent depreciation. The process of refining ever

advances ; for, though Satan is busy in endeavors to introduce alloy, the great Assayer detects his counterfeits. The believer is often in the furnace ; but his testimony is, “ When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” How many individuals, how many nations, once wealthy, become poor ! It is estimated that the coinage of the world loses, by wear, loss and other means, two hundred and fifty millions of dollars every year. The mines of Potosi, and many others, are exhausted. The Tagus and Pactolus no longer roll down golden sands. “ But the gold of that land is good.” Those treasures come from a source exhaustless as the Creator himself. All that is wanting is an enlargement of capacity to receive ; and that is guaranteed for eternity. Paul prays for the Ephesians : “ That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him ; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened ; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” Yes, it requires a divine illumination to enable Christians to discover, and an assurance from God to authorize them to credit, “ the riches of the glory of his

inheritance in the saints." A constantly approximating conformity to God, an increasing intimacy of communion with him, and a more wise and active desire to make others happy, form a wealth with which no earthly mine can compare. Was Moses infatuated, when he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt?

Reader, you, doubtless, have your day-dreams. You sometimes suffer Fancy to wave her wand, and invest you with a princely fortune. Submit yourself once more to that enchantment. Surround yourself with all imaginable wealth. Your hall of pleasures, like that of Ahasuerus, shall be paved with emerald. Your furniture and feasts shall surpass Oriental sumptuousness. Tissues of gold and silver, magnificent embroideries, the most precious gems and jewels, shall decorate your person. Like Aurungzebe, you shall roll in a stately carriage, incrustated with pearls and diamonds, your retinue shall extend for leagues, and your whole equipage glitter in the sun, while you yourself shall be the richest man on the globe. Poor man! if that is all you have! Have you yet to learn that such riches certainly make to themselves wings, and fly away as an eagle towards heaven; and that, while they stay even, they cannot satisfy? Suppose, however, that

such riches, once acquired, were secure for life. Can you take them with you to another world? Order your coffin, yea, your tomb, to be filled; do they go with you? Can your disembodied spirit take the iron chest, or even the key, through the dark valley? Spiritual treasures alone remain not for probate. During an invasion, when every one around him was hastily gathering up his goods for flight, Bias, one of the wise men of Greece, alone remained calm; and when asked why he took no pains to save anything, he replied, "I carry all my treasure with me." The believer carries all his treasures with him. Come who may, — hostile armies of men, or the hosts of darkness, — his heart need not fear. At the approach of the King of terrors, yea, of the final conflagration, he may calmly protest, "I carry all my treasures with me." And he goes where fire, storm, depreciation, and bankruptcy, are alike unknown. His celestial wardrobe and treasures are forever secure against moth, rust and thief.

And they are as satisfying as they are secure, being, in their own nature, suited to a rational soul. They are not a mere means to an end. God made the immortal spirit for himself, to enjoy communion with him forever; like him in character and benev-

olent activity. So long as it remains alienated and selfish, it is out of its element, and must be miserable. Solomon made an extensive experiment with the riches of this world. "I gathered me silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces; and whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit." He knew whereof he affirmed, when he said, "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing." The wealth there is in holiness and fellowship with Christ surpasses infinitely all other sources of enjoyment. Was ever a happier man on this globe than Paul? "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Who were the enviable persons of those days—Oriental princes, Roman emperors, or the Macedonian Christians, who, "in a great trial of affliction, had abundance of joy, and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality"? What, then, will be the abundance of joy in such treasures, where they are perfected, and will be forever accumulating?

This is coin which bears the imperial superscription, and is current everywhere. It is accepted at

the gate of death — there, where the gold of earth is so worthless. “The rich man also died, and was buried.” Could his wealth buy no elixir of life? Could not that purple robe, that fine linen, keep off disease? Ah, Dives! bid thy servants bring costly viands once more; order up the choice wine; send afar for all those skilled in medicine; let your gay friends stand around the bed, and see if they cannot laugh death away; let them open the coffers of gold, and see if they cannot bribe the King of terrors. Ah! the rich man also dies!

“Wherefore should I die, being so rich!” exclaimed a wealthy cardinal, Henry Beaufort. “If the whole realm would save my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by treasure to buy it. Will not death be bribed? Will money do nothing?”

We turn to Paulinus, bishop of Nola. He is rich, to be sure, in goods, but richer in graces. The Goths have broken into the city, and, like so many wolves, rush upon their prey. Those who have trusted to their treasures are now tortured to compel a disclosure of them. The good bishop falls into the enemy’s hands, and loses all; but what does he say? “Lord, let me not be troubled for my gold and silver; thou knowest it is not my treasure; that I have laid up in heaven, according to thy

command. I was warned of this judgment before it came, and provided for it; and where all my interest is, Lord, thou knowest."

True, it was not the rich man's wealth, nor any man's wealth, which of itself kept him out of heaven. Lazarus was carried to the bosom of one who had been rich in flocks, herds, and all possessions. Nor was it Lazarus' poverty that carried him to heaven, nor his sufferings either. He was none the better saint for his sores, or his penury, except as they contributed to his sanctification. Yet, unless Christ was mistaken, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven." "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." Upon first thought, it seems incredible that such wealth and such a weight of glory should be in reserve for any of the children of men. There would, indeed, be a hopeless incongruity between present character and future exaltation, were it not for the glory thus accruing to the munificence of God through Christ. His ultimate design in saving sinners is to bring honor to the person and priesthood of the Great Mediator, "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus."

Riches of grace are now exhibited, but their exceeding fulness cannot be known in the present state. The great day of disclosures is yet to come. Crowns are not given here; but the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give them at that day when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. That coronation day will be public to the universe. Then will the King of kings make up all his jewels; then will he display all his purchased treasures. There will be a divine pomp, a glorious splendor, on that day. "Then they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, forever and ever." "Then the trial of faith in all the redeemed saints — being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire — will be found unto praise, and honor, and glory; unto the praise, and honor, and glory of God the Father, in his electing love; unto the praise, and honor, and glory of Jesus Christ in his mediation; unto the praise, and honor, and glory of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification; unto the united, equal, eternal praise, honor, and glory of the triune God, who is blessed forever.

Many are the collateral purposes of God, in the

salvation of men ; but all centre in this, an eternal display of his grace in the gift of Christ. The whole of God's moral government has a reflexive aim ; all moral arrangements originating in him centre also in him. The gift of his Son was the result of an infinite and eternal impulse of love ; and while ransomed sinners will experience its fullest benefits, yet they are to make an eternal exhibition of the grace of that gift, for the glory of the giver. Here believers are only stammering on the alphabet of praise, and honor, and glory to God. But their tongues will be unloosed at the day of Christ's appearing. Then, and forever after, will they strew palm-branches ; then will they sing, Hosanna to the Son of David ! blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord : hosanna in the highest !

CHAPTER XII.

NO TEARS IN HEAVEN.

O, happy, happy country ! where
There entereth not a sin ;
And death, who keeps its portals fair
May never once come in.
No grief can change their day to night
The darkness of that land is light :
Sorrow and sighing God has sent
Far thence, to endless banishment.
And never more may one dark tear
Bedim their burning skies ;
For every one they shed while here,
In fearful agonies,
Glitters a bright and dazzling gem
In their immortal diadem.

C. BOWLES.

Is this the believer's only heritage ? Does this
vale of tears open to no brighter region ? To this
stormy sea is there no quiet haven ? Beyond this
firmament, so often overcast, is there no cloudless
sky ? We toil on, struggling with the elements,
alternately parched and chilled, famished and sur-
feited ; we buffet with human selfishness and Sa-
tanic malice ; we grope in a labyrinth of fallacies

we chase fatuous lights ; calumny shoots her poisoned arrows ; bulletins of war come daily, written over, within and without, in blood ; the earth we stand on heaves beneath us ; presently it opens, and we are swallowed up.

What means this mysterious drama ? Is the whole tale thus told ? Is man's life only a riddle ? Many bright dreams have we ; there are traditions of Paradise and a golden age ; for thousands of years have men been talking of Hesperian regions ; but for thousands of years have they dreamed, sinned, and suffered, till they drop into the grave.

Amid this perplexity and gloom, a voice is heard, " Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We go to him ; we find him infinitely benignant ; yet perfect rest we do not find. The sun loses none of its fierceness thereby, nor frosts aught of their chill ; disease has the same virulence, and slanderous tongues have the same venom as before. Emancipation from sin and its consequences is anything but complete. Even to the day of our exit from earth do we go on sighing O, wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? How, then, is it true, " Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord " ? What are we to think of those who,

up to the hour of their departure, still sin, suffer, and grieve? The messenger of the Apocalypse answers, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Complete deliverance, then, from all evils, is the future portion of believers. They enjoy exemption from physical evils. The resurrection-body will be perfectly free from all infirmities; all its organs discharge their offices with perfect exactness, and the vital forces play forever, with unabating freshness. But, without dwelling upon considerations of that kind, we are authorized to affirm an entire removal of every evil incident to the present constitution of things; and, keeping within the range of scriptural imagery, we might safely enlarge upon many points of joyful contrast. But allusion to a few only will suffice.

The inconveniences of hunger and thirst will not be experienced. What those inconveniences are, in their extreme, was known by Hagar when she said, "Let me not see the death of the child!" by the fainting Israelites when they dared not to

taste the dropping honey in the wood because of Saul's adjuration; by the Saviour on the cross, when he cried, "I thirst;" by many a perishing caravan; by many a shipwrecked crew; by many a starving province. And who is there that, by his own experience, has not often been reminded of the curse, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground"? But, to the redeemed, that curse reaches not beyond the grave. Lazarus is no longer spurned at the gate of affluence; he has ceased begging crumbs; nor does any one there beg a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters."

O, to receive manna from the hands of Jesus Christ! What flavor, beyond angels' food, will that possess! And, once seated with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there will be perpetual rest, but no craving, and no satiety.

Nor will there be any imperfection of the senses. The tongue of the dumb shall sing as loud and joyously as any. Every deaf ear, too, shall be unstopped. And how will many a Bartimeus leap for joy when he opens his eyes for the first time on such views as feast the vision in the Better Land!

It is not long since a blind Hindoo boy, who lived in a miserable hole which had been excavated for him in the ground, was drawing near his end. But his mind had been enlightened, through the instructions of a missionary, by the Spirit of God. “Let me *die*,” said he; “I do not like to stay in this dark place; I will go where there is light. I know the words are true, that God sent his Son to die for the sins of the world.” Hereupon he began to repeat some verses which he had learned. One especially pleased him above all others, for it seemed to suit his blind condition. It was, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand, at the latter day, upon the earth; and in my flesh I shall *see* God, whom I shall *see* for myself, and *my eyes* shall behold, and not another.” In his last moments, catching glimpses of what was before him, he exclaimed, “I see!—Now I have light!—I see him in his beauty!—Tell the missionary that the blind sees!—I glory in Christ!—I glory!”—As he said this, he slept in Jesus, and angels bore his happy spirit to that place where he beholds what no eye here hath seen, nor ear heard.

Yes, “I know that my Redeemer liveth. In my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”

There is no fatigue in heaven. "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God." To their activity there is indeed no cessation. They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. But there is no exhaustion, no languor attending that service. They never grow listless. Theirs is the bliss of ceaseless activity and unabating vigor. It is well that on earth the wicked find so many interruptions to wickedness. It is well that so much time must be spent by them in sleep, and by most of them in procuring a subsistence. If they had uninterrupted leisure to obey depraved impulses, what thousand-fold more horrid crimes would be committed! But God's people would gladly even now labor without cessation for his glory. With what satisfaction, then, may they think of a world where is no night; no loss of time in sleep; no lassitude; no enfeebled powers; no tottering steps; where the years never come in which they have no pleasure; where, to all eternity, there is not one interruption to their holy employments, but where the quiet of repose and the pleasure of activity coëxist blissfully and forever.

There is no sickness, pain, or death in heaven. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." In the salutations of that world, inquiries after one another's

health find no place. From age to age, not one will speak of being indisposed ; but, in the glow of immortal youth, every one of those thousands will say he is well. “Almost well,” said Richard Baxter, when asked on his death-bed how he did ; and now he is well indeed.

Terrible is the derangement sin has made in our physical constitution. It has fitted every nerve to be an instrument of anguish. Not a point of contact do we present to outward objects, but may be the inlet of more agony than tongue can tell ; and all is the work of sin. The array of diseases to which man is subject is truly appalling ; and for every one of them sin is primarily responsible. But all remains of sin, original or actual, believers leave behind them, and hence, too, all sickness and pain. The healing art is a terrestrial profession. Even the balm in Gilead, and the Physician there, perform all their work this side the grave. Some scars, perhaps, but no wounds, go to heaven. There are no funerals there ; no shrouds, coffins, hearses, cemeteries. In that congregation there are no habiliments of mourning. There is nothing sable in Paradise. Spotless white is the court dress of heaven. The recollection of suffering will cease to be painful. Martyrs can

speak of fagots and the rack, and others listen, without shuddering.

Outward annoyances will cease. There, in a sense only shadowed forth in the one hundred and twenty-first Psalm, "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evils; he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore." It was only while the earth remaineth, that God said, cold and heat shall not cease. God has spoken of no summer or winter in heaven. That world, if it move at all, moves not in such an ecliptic as ours. There are no tropics, no polar regions there. Pitfalls cannot be found there, neither do thorns grow there. It was the ground of this world, not of heaven, that was cursed.

There is complete exemption from every evil growing out of our present social relations. Manifold as those relations are, rich as is the harvest of enjoyment which they might afford, if sin had not deranged them, so manifold and so bitter are the fruits of their perversion. The amount of domestic unhappiness; for instance, is beyond all estimate. Abused friendship is an ample source of disquiet. Many a one besides Cæsar has exclaimed, "*Thou, too, Brutus!*"

Between rulers and the ruled, there is not a little of jarring. International interests are perpetually in conflict. Many a soul sighs, "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest." Well, such wings are presently furnished, and the saint flies away, and is at rest. He alights where is no "battle of the warrior, with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood;" "but there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby."

Friendships do not cool in heaven. If misunderstandings are possible, none are too proud to make explanations. There is no parting there. The redeemed forget how to sigh. And never are they annoyed by slanderous tongues. "Woe is me," sighed the psalmist, and with him many an other, "woe is me that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?" From its actual occupation, one would think that this member was given man only for evil speaking and idle talking. O, how much precious time runs thus to waste! How many daggers are thus plunged deep! How do blood and tears flow apace

I shall never forget a little incident of foreign travel. After months spent in noting points of resemblance and contrast between other countries and our own ; after viewing persons in all situations, from the throne downward, one day, in the street, I observed a lady in tears. Among the thousands met with, this was the first instance of visible grief. It was impressive. The thought at once arose, Then they weep here, too ! Here, as on the western continent, are tongues charged with venom ! And sensitive hearts are beating and bleeding here as at home ! But in the Better Land we shall travel very far before we meet a surprise like that. Long, long centuries must we follow the Lamb before meeting one whose eyes are red with weeping. The spiritual eye does not secrete tears. It is here only that we can weep with them that weep ; there, we can only rejoice with them that rejoice. In its common acceptation there is no sympathy in heaven, because there is no occasion for it.

Take heart, then, ye servants of God, who are maligned, who are unrighteously dealt with. Take heart, thou man of God, whom ungrateful, bigoted Greece once drove, and would still gladly drive, from her shores ; and ye who protest, under the bastinado, against Armerian superstitions ; take heart, ye who

are persecuted for righteousness' sake, the world over; God shall soon wipe away all tears from your eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

Mental disorders and perturbations will be at an end. How far the effects of existing obliquities in the mind will remain in a future world, I make no affirmation. But that no new fallacies will possess the mind, we may boldly assert; and that all the faculties will come into far more efficient and harmonious action than ever before, we may not doubt. The imagination will be in due subjection; the judgment wisely regulated; the memory greatly quickened, and the association of ideas determined by principles of the highest, holiest philosophy. The emotive faculties of the soul will also come under the sway of a sanctified logic. To those who are here liable to be carried away by surges of mere emotion, it must seem a high happiness to have their feelings all sweetly controlled by a will that is calm, firm, and intuitively wise. The soul will not then, as now, suffer from excess of feeling, or a stupefying reaction. All tears of joy, no less than of sorrow, will be wiped away. Great must be his exultation, when the saint finds himself in no farther

danger of feeling too much, as well as too little ; when he finds a perfect balance introduced among the powers and affections of the soul, all of them working harmoniously and vigorously, former jarring and obliquities completely at an end. What bliss, to have all the unholy passions, — pride, anger, envy, — those vultures of the mind, forever banished from the breast !

But most of all, there will be no sin there. This consideration underlies all these points, and gives to them all their charm, for without this they would not be worth considering. Without holiness heaven would not be heaven. Sin is the evil of evils. To be freed from its power is the Christian's strongest wish. Well, it is to the spirits of just men made perfect that departed saints are come, — to the spirits of just men made perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. They are washed in innocency, pure and perfect, when the wedding garment is put on. Of allurements to sin there are none. No one prays there, "Lead us not into temptation ;" safely do they follow the Lamb whithersoever he leadeth them, and it is never into temptation. Into that paradise the serpent cannot intrude. In the river of life there are no swellings, as of Jordan, at which the roaring lion cometh up.

Satan's fiery darts cannot surmount the walls of the New Jerusalem. The decalogue is not needed there. The groves and high places of that fair country are never abused to idolatrous purposes. There is no Canaanite in the land. In that abode there are no lusts, no relics of sin, no ebullitions of passions ; hence, no upbraiding of conscience, and no confession to be made. Paul never exclaims, "O, wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? "

" No hidden grief,

No wild and cheerless vision of despair,

No vain petition for a swift relief,

No tearful eyes, no broken hearts are there.

The storm's black wing

Is never spread athwart celestial skies ;

Its wailings blend not with the voice of spring

As some too tender flow'ret fades and dies.

Let us depart,

If home like this await the weary soul.

Look up, thou stricken one ! Thy wounded heart

Shall bleed no more at sorrow's stern control."

CHAPTER XIII.

HOLINESS OF HEAVEN.

O, mother dear, Jerusalem,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end.
Thy joys when shall I see?
O, happy harbor of God's saints!
O, sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrows can be found, —
No grief, no care, no toil.

WILLIAM BURKE!T.

Now just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold, the city shone like the sun; the streets, also, were paved with gold; and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!" And after that they shut up the gates; which when I had seen, I wished myself among them.

BUNYAN.

It has been remarked that a great city is a great evil. Aristotle insisted that governments ought to prevent the accumulation of inhabitants in large towns. In modern times more than one sovereign has attempted to do it. It is undeniable that, while commerce, the arts, and other branches of civiliza

tion, are greatly indebted to cities, at the same time it has been at a fearful expense of life, comfort and morals. It is in these populous centres that the pestilence dwells permanently, or most frequently pays its terrific visits. An excess of burials over births is no unusual circumstance. The poverty and manifold wretchedness, commonly concealed from public view, are truly appalling. But it is in the ingenious and stupendous frauds, in the covert and shameless vices, in the records of police and other courts, — those vast folios of loathsome and startling abominations, — that we find most convincing proof that a great city is a great evil. Whatever exceptions there may have been, whatever of splendor and refinement may generally be found in them, it has still been true that ever since Nimrod laid the foundations of Babel and other cities in the land of Shinar, within these crowded precincts have been the most productive hot-beds of corruption. It is there that juvenile depravity has ripened with preccious vigor. It is there alone that wickedness becomes permanently and compactly organized, presenting a consolidated front to wholesome laws and virtuous sentiments. There only are found the theatre, and other public spiracles of the bottomless pit.

“Thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of every land.”

But is this necessarily so? Is there any essential incompatibility between a congregated population and general purity and piety? Is effeminacy, is concentrated iniquity, inherent in the municipal organization? Ah! blessed be God, there is one city, called “the holy city,” over which the Saviour never weeps, but in which he ever rejoices; of which he is the everlasting light and glory “And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” The guarantee to the perfect purity of New Jerusalem lies in the fact that its King is a king of infinite, immutable holiness. His intense, peculiar presence must exclude all the impure, and must completely and powerfully assimilate to himself all who bear, in any measure, a moral resemblance.

With regard to unfallen angels, it would seem that the great crisis in their history is past. At a period of revolt they remained loyal; and, without presumption, we may suppose them to be already

confirmed in holiness. Certainly, at the consummation of all things, their character and state will be established beyond all uncertainty.

But with regard to the redeemed of the Lord, - they who alone, not being original citizens, enter there, — it appears that they become at once freed from all original sin. That deep-seated and pervading corruption of their nature is never wholly removed in this world. Despite regeneration, and the farthest advances in sanctification, the body of death remains a fearful encumbrance. The consequence is a continued struggle, and, along with all the fruits of the Spirit, an intermingling of irregular desires and unholy emotions. But that conflict terminates at death. The stains of apostasy are then all effaced, and believers wake up in the likeness of God. Once introduced into the heavenly metropolis, where the soul is perfectly exposed to that glory of God which is the light of heaven, the saint has no desire and no need of concealment. A perfect transparency pervades his spirit. He has now no secret sins to be set in the light of God's countenance. "There can in no wise enter therein anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination." Inbred depravity, that awful source of all mischief and abominations, will be completely

eradicated. It cannot pass the threshold of that paradise. But in the holiness of saints in heaven there is something more than the absence of all proclivity to evil. Their excellence is not simply the transparency of a quiet fountain, or the serenity of ether. It is more positive. It implies an unclouded apprehension and approval of what is holy. There is in the souls of glorified believers a perfect propension toward all that is excellent. When the moral vision of any one on earth has been rectified, every glimpse of holiness appears refreshing. Find it in the temple, find it in an ordinance, find it in saint or angel, it is lovely. But when holiness is seen at its source, then is it ravishing. There is none holy as the Lord. We sometimes speak of a holy man, and occasionally we meet with what looks like a stray beam of divine effulgence ; but, how refracted ! How easily dimmed ! How unlike its ineffable and inextinguishable source ! God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. There is a sun whose rays cannot be sullied. On the stagnant marsh and in the noisome dungeon they are as uncontaminated as in their glorious home.

But how differently must the glory of the thrice holy Jehovah appear to one in his immediate presence, — to one whose spiritual eye is no longer

defective ! “ O, what ardent love,” exclaimed Socrates, “ would virtue inspire, if she could be seen ! ” “ As for me,” exclaims the longing pilgrim, “ I will behold thy face in righteousness ! ” and awaking, at length, in the divine likeness, this longing shall be satisfied. “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” And when that sun of heaven rises on the soul, it is as life from the dead. Those orient splendors quicken it into a holy activity. There are no impediments to a vigorous development of the sanctified powers ; no counter-working of unsubdued sin ; no consciousness of guilt ; no distraction from ignorance or forgetfulness ; but a steady, ardent advance in whatever is right and excellent. It was only because still in the terrestrial Jerusalem that Isaiah cried out, “ Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips ; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts ! ” But in heaven there is no dread, no shame, nor anything to interrupt the ceaseless progress of holy attainment. God is all, and in all. Self there comes into its proper place. The law of equal love to neighbors, and supreme love to God, sweetly sways all minds. Covetousness, which worketh so many abomina-

tions, never gains admittance. Saints can look, year after year, at the jasper and topaz in the foundation, at the immense pearls in the gates, and at the pure gold everywhere, without once wishing to appropriate anything to themselves. Naboth has no neighbor to compass his destruction for the sake of his vineyard. Judas has gone to his own place, and with him all the avaricious, fraudulent, rapacious sons of earth, who ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward. In the New Jerusalem they have all things in common, and that is the only city where communism is safe or desirable.

Neither is there any desire in heaven for social superiority; no self-seeking that can be gratified with elevation above others. Along with the love of lucre, ambition has contributed much to make this world so unlike to that wherein dwelleth righteousness. But heaven is the abode of humility. Saints do not grow vain-glorious by being advanced to familiarity with angels, yea, with the Lamb of God himself. They are all subject one to another, and are clothed with humility. In that temple there is no eagerness for the chief seats; at that marriage-supper there is no seeking of the uppermost rooms. Nothing is done through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind each esteems oth-

ers better than himself. Ostentation is unknown there. A common attire, the white robe, is furnished to all ; but no phylacteries are there. In their deportment and praises there is no effort to attract attention or admiration. The Pharisee's trumpet is unheard. In simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, do they have their conversation in that world.

Does spiritual culture have an engrossing interest with me ? Is the holy education of my immortal soul the object of earnest effort and unceasing prayer ? Who that looks for an entrance into the New Jerusalem would not say, Close the prison door upon me ; chain me to the oar ; place me on the rack ; let all outward evils befall me, if I may but be like my Saviour, — pure, even as he is pure.

If there be in the universe such a place as the Elysium of the ancients, or the Paradise of the Moslems, may the holy God deliver us from such abodes of inanity and impurity ! Scarcely more scriptural than the views of Pagans and Mohammedans are those of not a few nominal Christians. In this age of utilitarian schemes, it is quite characteristic that a sermon should have been published on the “ Utility of Heavenly Bliss ! ”

The number is not small who appear to think of

heaven, and desire it, only because they must die, and go somewhere. They consent, from necessity, to choose it as the least of two evils. Few, it would seem, have any intelligent scriptural aspiration after the blessedness of heaven; panting for that world mainly because therein dwelleth righteousness; because the holy God and the spotless Lamb are the light thereof; because there shall in no wise enter therein anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. "I long for untainted purity!" said a departing pilgrim; "I long for untainted purity!" May my last end be like his. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

CHAPTER XIV.

ACTIVITY IN HEAVEN.

There shall He welcome thee, when thou shalt stand
On his bright morning hills, with smiles more sweet
Than when at first he took thee by the hand,
Through the fair earth to lead thy tender feet ;
He shall bring back, but brighter, broader still,
Life's early glory to thine eyes ; again
Shall clothe thy spirit with new strength, and fill
Thy leaping heart with warmer love than then.

BRYANT.

IN the minds of many, future blessedness resolves itself into little else than escape from future punishment, and from the inconveniences of the present life. It is to them the consummation of ease ; perpetual repose from labor and suffering ; a quietism so complete as to admit of no effort ; an Elysium, on whose hazy horizon and in whose balmy atmosphere no cloud ever rises ; where everything is quiescent save the river of life, and that soon discharges itself into the Dead Sea ; where, indeed, the negation is so complete as to admit not only of no trouble, but scarcely of anything else.

Others, having more sentimental activity of mind, not satisfied with a scene monotonous and torpid, introduce more that is positive and life-like. Theirs is a paradise of spacious groves and lawns ; of tasteful avenues and bowers ; of soft breezes perfumed by perennial flowers ; where society the most cultivated is always at hand, including companionable angels ; where all are very beautiful and very graceful, and have the most exquisite sensibilities ; where are no sighs, no farewells, no rudeness ; where there is nothing in particular to do but to saunter over beds of violets, or muse in some sequestered spot, lulled by the softened notes of distant cherubim.

True, when we reflect that toil and suffering are a part of the penalty under which our fallen race now labor ; that bereavements are unavoidable ; that disappointment comes from the failure of plans ; heart-aches from poverty, and ingratitude, and in general from the calculating selfishness of this world ; it is not strange that the drying up of these sources of sorrow should sometimes seem the perfection of bliss ; that the cessation of these sources of annoyance should seem all that is necessary to constitute heaven. Nor is it strange that even sanctified minds, and particularly the less reflecting, while longing to be free from sin, should also, in their desires for freedom

from its present penal consequences, unduly magnify the negative elements of future blessedness. It is natural, and justifiable, too, that such of God's people as have suffered much from physical infirmities, yes, that all of them should look joyfully to the hour of death as the hour of release from fatigue and pain. We sympathize with prophets stoned and tormented; with primitive Christians in their baptism of blood; with the hunted Waldenses; with persecuted Protestants, who have come out from corrupt Christian organizations, and from Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Heathenism; we sympathize with them all, as they sigh for their abode, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest." Joy to you, ye martyrs of Jesus! No chain, or scourge, or fagot, can touch you in the world whither ye are gone! Ye living and suffering witnesses for the truth, we give you apostolic greeting: "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer. Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

and to you, who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." And, ye sons and daughters of the Lord, now wasting with consumption, tortured by nervous derangement, or otherwise racked by pain, we congratulate you on your approach to that world, the inhabitant whereof shall never say, "I am sick." And ye spirits of just men made perfect, I hear a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth ; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Ay, ye denizens of the New Jerusalem, ye authorized fugitives from the bondage of this nether region, we wish ourselves with you in that asylum of the free, whence none can ever reclaim you for fresh manacles and stripes !

But a heaven of mere rest, in the literal sense of freedom from effort, we do not desire. No : "Give me a world where there is something to do," demands the believer who understands the nature and necessities of his soul. An abode of simple quietude and dreams 's no Paradise to him.

The Scripture use of the word *rest*, to denote future blessedness, is somewhat comprehensive and figurative. No doubt it denotes freedom from temp-

tation, — perfect exemption from fatiguing efforts, from all disturbance from without, and all disquiet from within ; but it is nowhere used to limit heavenly bliss to such a blank negation. True, it doth not yet appear what we shall be, or what we shall do ; but free agency will be unimpaired ; the resurrection-body will admit of strenuous activity, unattended with weariness ; and the conditions of the heavenly state are such as demand positive and uninterrupted service of God.

We are made for activity. Holy effort is the normal state of our being, while to be idle and inert is to be apostate. Before he fell, man was placed in the garden to dress it and to keep it ; and the curse resting upon him since the fall does not consist in the work required, but in the weariness and discomfort which attend exertion. These, mingled with our required efforts, convert them into penal toil and drudgery. But the more noble and aspiring a mind is, the more joyfully and vigorously does it exert itself, and the more of luxury does it extract from effort. All great men, all useful men, — those, too, who have accomplished great things for evil, — have been laborious men. Demosthenes, Cæsar, Newton, Franklin, Howard, Napoleon, worked hard. The Romans, in describing an extraordinary

man, were always careful to mention that he was *incredibili industria, diligentia singulari*. And, as long as Rome prospered, *Stimula*, who incited to diligence, and *Strenua*, who gave constancy and firmness, were among the received deities ; but *Quies*, Goddess of Rest, they would not admit within the city ; her temple was without the Col-line gate.

On the other hand, remission of effort brings on languor, and health and energy go to decay. When the enterprise of the Assyrian empire ceased, effeminacy began, and subjugation to Media and Babylon was the result. For the same reason, those powers yielded to Cyrus ; and then Persia, in turn, to Macedon. Look at India, now ; look at China ; what they are, or till within a limited time have become, such they have been for centuries. They have produced nothing great or noble. The hosts that swarm there may exhibit a frivolous activity, but society is torpid. Intellect has been benumbed for ages. The human race, as a whole, would have suffered little loss had all those millions for generations been teeming on some other planet. Leaving religion out of the account, we cannot picture to ourselves a high state of human society on earth, which shall at all approximate to perfec-

tion, in which there is not intense activity. Such a city as Augustus Cæsar would found, and call Apragapolis, in which no business was to be transacted, would be fit only for mutes and idiots.

“The keenest pangs the wretched find
Are rapture to the dreary void, —
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feelings unemployed.”

Does not analogy teach that man, being prosperous and happy here, whenever active in doing right, must be proportionately so hereafter, when all impediments to exertion are withdrawn? Who that reflects upon the active powers of the soul, and their evident design, can believe that in heaven there will be any indolence — that any drones can find admittance there? The argument is still stronger when we view the regenerated soul. The whole tendency of grace is to incite the mind to high and holy effort. Not the first inquiry alone, but the motto, is, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” No sooner had the woman of Samaria found the Messiah than she called the whole city to come and behold him. The motive power of Christianity is that of a spring, pressing outwardly and constantly. Piety is benevolence, and, by its own

nature, communicative and active. Who that has partaken of the gracious amplitude of divine benefits can refrain from inviting all to share? or from gratefully exerting himself, in every appropriate way, in the service of his Redeemer? To be idle is repugnant to all the laws of the hidden life. Goodness finds its emblem, not in the pool, but in the stream. Run it must, or it cannot live. In proportion as the vital principle takes possession of a believer's heart, it impels him right onward in doing God service.

Now, when delivered from this body of death, from the hinderances of this world, from the enfeebling effects of sin, does not the believer enter upon a field of intense activity, such as he never knew before? Will his ardor be cooled by contact with seraphim, and by participation in the animating scenes of the world of glory? "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night." They serve him vigorously. What they do is done with a will. Relaxation is neither needed nor desired. Objects to be sought must present themselves so momentous as to call forth every energy. These glorious ends cannot fail to awaken such a flame of holy enterprise as their hearts never knew on earth. All this, too, will be

without fatigue. Efficiently as they serve God, it is not laboriously, so that in strenuous exertion there is rest, while mere repose would be misery. And it is a delightful consideration that none of that activity is misdirected. While, as is probable, vast enterprises will be undertaken, in the world to come, for the furtherance of truth and holiness, no wasteful expenditure of energy will be witnessed in carrying them out. How should this reconcile us to deaths of those who are eminently useful, and are in the midst of their days ! We are to remember that earth and heaven are equally a part of the domain of Jehovah, and that it is his right to transfer from the one to the other, according as he pleases. Shall we, then, object if he choose to have any one, at any particular time, serve him in heaven rather than on earth ? Do you think it strange in the husbandman that he should call a hired servant, as his wisdom may dictate, from one field to another, where his comfort shall be greater, his efforts be more congenial, more productive, and more acceptable to his lord ? Then will we not complain at any of the divine proceedings in this matter, which at first seem unaccountable, and which to survivors are indeed most painful.

Do you point, for instance, to a mother, in the

midst of highest usefulness, her presence peculiarly indispensable to a numerous group, for whom her efforts and prayers are unceasing? I point you to the same mother, in a sphere immeasurably larger, putting forth efforts far greater, with unspeakably more of satisfaction to herself and approval to the Lord. Has the spiritual kingdom of God, embracing its two provinces of earth and heaven, suffered loss? Is the aggregate of human usefulness diminished? What is it to be useful, but to be where God would have us, and doing what he requires?

A youthful preacher, as M'Cheyn, engages the hearts of a church and congregation. At their invitation he is duly constituted pastor of the flock. Their affections flow out to him without stint or interruption. God owns his labors for the spiritual good of a whole community; but, in the midst of the first fruits of what promises to be an abundant harvest, the ardent reaper is himself cut down, or rather caught up to the Paradise of God. Is he lost? Is his whole work done? Will he speak of Christ crucified to smaller numbers, or with a heart less warm in his glorious theme? Will it be with a coal from a less glowing altar that the seraphim shall there touch his lips?

So, too, in the case of the young missionary,

— Brainard at thirty, Mills at thirty-one, Martyn at thirty-two, — or others, who, in the dew of their youth, have suddenly been called away. Is it without foresight on the part of God? Is it from a want of economy that he withdraws laborers just as they step into the whitened field? Aside from the sanctified influence of their deaths upon survivors here, are they not serving God far more efficiently in his temple above? Have they not been transferred to just that station of heavenly activity for which they were prepared? Is any of the knowledge, or enterprise, or sagacity, acquired here, of no avail there, where all energies are tasked to the utmost? Who knows best where the servants of God can do most for him and his church?

CHAPTER XV.

RESURRECTION BODY.

Shall I be left abandoned in the dust,
When fate, relenting, lets the flower revive?
Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
Deny him, doomed to perish, hope to live?
Is it for this fair virtue oft must strive
With disappointment, penury and pain?
No; heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive,
And man's majestic beauty bloom again,
Bright through the eternal year of love's triumphant reign.

BEATTIE.

THERE are four grand epochs in the history of every sinner saved by Christ. The first is that of natural birth, by which event another being, fearfully and wonderfully made, commences an existence that shall never end, yet under auspices dark and fearful, inheriting disease within, discomforts without, and displeasure from above.

The second epoch is that of the new birth, when this heir of sin and wrath becomes an heir of God; when the disordered soul, oppressed by the bonds of sin, is renewed and disenthralled, translated from the domain of Satan, naturalized in a new

kingdom, united intimately and indissolubly with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The third epoch is that of natural death; the termination of this probationary period, the separation of body and soul for a season,—the one returning to earth as it was, the other to God, free from sin, and sharing in all the blessedness possible till the last epoch, that of resurrection, which consummates the whole.

By that event we understand the reproduction, at the last day, of the same bodies formerly occupied, and the reünion of the soul of each saint with his own body, thus raised and glorified. We understand not a new creation, not the calling into existence of a body formed from substances which did not enter into the old; we understand not an indiscriminate occupation of tenements supplied at Christ's summons, but the refitting of the tabernacle of each believer for the everlasting inhabitation of his own spirit; neither of them, nor the united whole, having lost its identity.

This doctrine appears to have passed, insensibly and extensively, from the thoughts and the literature of the Christian public; yet it is a fundamental article in our faith. To strike it out is to remove the corner-stone from the Gospel fabric

“Because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not, for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.”

It is the spirit of infidelity, alone, which can set aside the doctrine of a future resurrection, and which, carried out consistently, would overthrow the whole Gospel system. There is no gainsaying the apostle's summary logic: if Christians rise not, Christ rose not; if Christ rose not, he and his apostles are false witnesses; we are out upon the gloomy, trackless sea of scepticism.

This is one of the test truths of our religion, because it is purely a doctrine of revelation. The human mind, left to itself, would, probably, never have conjectured such a thing. Nature, unaided, is not only dim, but wholly dark upon this point; and when its possibility is suggested, speculation is far more likely to reject this than the doctrine of the soul's immortality.

As, then, this article of our belief is exclusively one of revelation, we are to go at once, and with unhesitating confidence, to the Holy Scriptures. “Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice

of the Son of Man, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life." (John 6 40.) "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." The clause, "and I will raise him up at the last day," is repeated in the 44th and 54th verses, and one similar in the 39th. "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." "Now if Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

These passages establish the fact that at the close of this dispensation there will be a resurrection of all the righteous dead, who shall come forth from their graves as certainly as Christ did from his. Special stress is laid upon the event of Christ's resurrection, in proof of the resurrection of believers "But now is Christ raised from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." Before him no one had come from the grave without being

again subject to death ; and, as the first fruits are a sample and pledge of the approaching harvest, so our Lord's coming from the grave is the earnest of a like ingathering of his people. His was both type and guaranty of what shall be on the broad scale at their resurrection. His own reāpppearance from the tomb was the crowning evidence that he is the faithful and true witness, and that each of his promises for the future is as sure of accomplishment as those already fulfilled.

But, beyond this, there is a security for the saints' resurrection in their union to Christ. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." "Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." "But in Christ shall all be made alive, yet every man in his own order ; Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." "For, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." The peculiar, vital union, subsisting between believers and their risen Lord, warrants the assurance of their own triumphant awaking from the dust.

Such are some of the more important declarations of the New Testament which demonstrate the future resurrection of the bodies of believers. The Scrip-

tures, moreover, furnish examples illustrative of that event. Thus, the son of the widow of Sarepta, soon after death was again restored to life ; the son of the Shunamite, after the arrival of the prophet from Mount Carmel ; and another while they were burying him in the sepulchre of Elisha. So, too, Jairus' daughter, and Dorcas, were restored to life soon after decease ; the widow's son at Nain, while the remains were on their way to the sepulchre, and Lazarus, after four days' corruption in the tomb.

In these instances, the bodies raised, so far as appears, were, in all respects, the same as before ; and no less subject to dissolution. Hence they were quite unlike those which will be reproduced at the general resurrection ; yet the main fact in the two cases is the same — a miraculous reünion of the soul with the same body, re-constituting the same person as before.

And a most august occasion will that be. “ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.” “ In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump ; for the trumpet shall sound.” Without insisting on the literal exactness of this description, we cannot understand less than

that the occasion will be one of surpassing grandeur ; that our Lord will come, not only in his own divine glory, but with the glory of his Father, attended by the holy angels, with inconceivable splendor, majesty and power.

Yet, though the resurrection shall be general, it will also be successive, believers enjoying fitting priority, as it is written : “ But every man in his own order ; Christ the first fruits ; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” “ The dead in Christ shall rise first.”

“ But some man will say, How are the dead raised up ; and with what body do they come ? ” The question is natural, and, keeping within the limits of revelation and sober judgment, a reply is due to the inquiry.

The same body will be raised. Without wasting time in disquisition upon what constitutes identity, or upon the changes which every living creature constantly undergoes, suffice it to say, that, notwithstanding all its mutations, the same body which is born is the one which dies, and the one which dies is that which will be raised again. It would be deemed irrelevant, in this connection, to discuss abstruse questions relating to substances, atoms, and the like ; all that is important, or possible to know

on the subject at present, is, that whatever may be essential to identity will be preserved ; so that it is proper to affirm now, and will then be evidently true, that the body which died is the one that is raised. The translation of Enoch and Elijah, the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, the testimony that they which sleep in their graves shall come forth,—indeed, all testimony of holy writ upon this point, establishes the truth that the body raised is identical with that from which separation took place. The changes that occur at regeneration, departure from the body, and reünion to the same after having been in Paradise, do not affect the identity of the soul ; nor do the revolutions effected by growth, dissolution and resurrection, destroy the identity of the body ; nor do all these combined impair the identity of the person, when these two elements of his constitution shall have been reünited. Abraham will be forever conscious to himself, and known to his family as the same Abraham who bought the field of Ephron, and the cave which was therein ; and the precious dust first deposited there shall come forth, his own beloved Sarah. Samuel J. Mills was not buried irrecoverably, nor has any believer been lost in the ocean. The sea shall

ere long, give up its dead unharmed Each saint
in Christ Jesus may say,

“In ocean cave still safe with thee
The germ of immortality :
And calm and peaceful is my sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.”

It will be a spiritual body. “And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain ; it may chance of wheat or some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh ; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial : but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So, also, is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

By this we do not understand that the resurrec-

tion body will be a pure spirit, — which is a contradiction in terms, — but spirit-like compared with the present. (1 Cor. 15 : 50.) There will be a body still, as truly as there now is ; and without trenching upon its identity, Christ will mould it into a perfect adaptation to the heavenly world. What the precise character of its constitution, what its specific properties and endowments may be, we know not ; for the future state is so necessarily unlike to the present, and such is the divine silence of the Scriptures in regard to these details, that we shrink from all attempts to anticipate the knowledge of that day. Idle curiosity may propound questions without number ; adventurous speculation may attempt to solve them ; but it is generally useless, and may be mischievous. One hour after the archangel's trump has sounded, believers will know more on this subject than all which they could have learned previously, by the most earnest, life-long study.

The resurrection body will be incorruptible and immortal. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. “ For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

It will be inherently exempt from decay, and

removed from all outward influences which might weaken or disorder it.

It is a common and not improbable idea that all the redeemed will forever exult in undecaying youth. The school-men were accustomed to say that all will rise of the same age. However that may be, we are certain that the resurrection body will be healthful and vigorous. "It is sown in weakness ; it is raised in power." It will be perfectly and forever free from languor, weariness, and disease. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." The eye of the patriarch shall never grow dim again ; Jacob shall no longer halt, and Lazarus retain no trace of his malady ; for then "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart ; and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." They shall all be girded with strength, — with immortal vigor to serve God, day and night, in his temple.

The resurrection bodies of saints will be most beautiful and glorious. "It is sown in dishonor ; it is raised in glory." No one of our race since the fall has had a body in all respects faultless. Every child of God shall hereafter possess one absolutely perfect. Yes ; these vile bodies, subject to disease,

distortion, decay, the instruments of sin, shall have an exquisite symmetry of features and proportion.

No Grecian artist, however faultless his eye, and fervid his imagination, ever conceived of a form so ethereal, so stately, so enchantingly graceful, as shall then belong to the saint whose body was the most unlovely and misshapen here. The resurrection body will be perfectly suited to the occupancy of a perfect soul, in the temple and immediate presence of the King of kings. Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. Yes; he “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.”

And would we know what Christ's glorious body is ? Then must we see him on the mount of transfiguration, when “His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” We must behold him in apocalyptic effulgence : “His countenance as the sun shineth in his strength.” Such is the archetype of the believer's resurrection body. The masterpiece of supreme power and wisdom will be those future bodies of the saints, and the re-

union with them of the spirits of just men made perfect.

Why is it, then, that epitaphs should now so seldom recognize this glorious truth? A false, unchristian taste on this point appears to have spread widely in our own land, and some other parts of Christendom. It is painful to observe to what extent recent cemeteries are devoid of all scriptural sentiment in their monumental records. Formerly it was not so. In the Catacombs of Rome, where the primitive Christians were interred, is many a testimony like this: — “In Christ: Alexander is not dead, but lives beyond the stars, and his body rests in this tomb.” Go to the burial-places of our godly fathers, and you read: — “In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.” But our modern style is coming fast into conformity to what is called the severely chaste and attic, but really atheistic usage of pagan Greece.

We honor and commend for imitation the pious forethought of that excellent bishop of London, who provided by his will that *Resurgam*, “I shall rise again,” should be inscribed on his grave-stone.

The subject of recognizing departed Christian friends comes up once more. We have as yet known those friends only in the body. It is im-

possible for us, if we would, to dissociate our affections and our recollections of them from those forms so endeared to us. That disruption of soul and body which we witnessed at their death was to us painful, perhaps overwhelming. We long to see them once more in their house which is from heaven. And therein we shall be gratified. Nor are the yearnings of the natural heart unauthorized.

‘O, when a mother meets on high
The child she lost in infancy,
Has she not then, for pains and fears,
The day of woe, the watchful night,
For all her sorrows and her tears,
An over-payment of delight?’

“Not as a child shall we again behold her,
For when, with rapture wild,
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child,
But a fair maiden in her Father’s mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful, with all the soul’s expression,
Shall we behold her face.”

CHAPTER XVI.

PERPETUITY OF BLISS IN HEAVEN

“ Soon, and forever ! ”

Such promise our trust,
Though ashes to ashes,
And dust unto dust :
Soon, and forever,
Our union shall be
Made perfect, our glorious
Redeemer, in thee.
When the sins and the sorrows
Of time shall be o’er,
Its pangs and its partings
Remembered no more ;
When life cannot fail,
And when death cannot sever,
Christians with Christ shall be
Soon, and forever.

MONSEL.

THERE are few themes which cloy sooner, or have been more thoroughly exhausted, than the shortness of terrestrial life, and the universality of death. For centuries men have talked, and sung, and sighed about it. From immemorial ages a sad, yet untiring eye has been upon the look-out for every-

thing frail and transient, from which to borrow an additional illustration. But in the fields of metaphor there are no more gleanings. Even poetry dies for lack of aliment. The earth has come to be one great mausoleum ; and every hillock, every dale we meet with, has its *memento mori*. We cannot, then, forget the subject. Each setting sun, each expiring year, forces it upon our notice. And thus will it ever be. So long as the moon sails through the heavens, so long as a dial marks the rapid shadow, or an arrow remains in death's quiver, so long will the mind be impressed by these considerations. That element of our natures, which renders us susceptible to such impressions from the fleeting uncertainties of present existence, is the same which connects us with the future, and sends our thoughts onward unto eternity.

There is an oracle in man which has spoken of fortunate islands, with their perpetual spring ; which has told the wild Indian, too, that he shall renew the chase in a better land, far to the west. But dreams and traditions do not satisfy us. We need, and we have, a more sure word of prophecy. Is, then, the happiness of heaven without end ? May the people of God cherish this anticipation with firm assurance ?

God, in his word, has set forth this truth under various expressions. One is that of an endless life “Of them that sleep in the dust of the earth some shall awake to everlasting life.” “The righteous shall go into life eternal,” — “shall never see death.” Not without reason is death used to represent the sum of penal evils, and life made the symbol of all things desirable. Men struggle for life as for nothing else ; and in this strong love of life is an earnest of immortality, — an intimation that the soul was not made for less than unending consciousness, a sleepless activity of mind and heart. We feel, too, that, in order to complete happiness, all this must be under the control of perfect love. This alone can realize the highest idea of life. Such an image, thus meeting the deep demands of our nature, inspiration presents. “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death ;” for “this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life ;” — all which comes through union by faith to him who is the author and giver of life. “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life ; and I will raise him up at the last day.” Hence, when a believer reaches the close of his present

journey, he does not leave the land of the living ; he goes to it. In his exchange of worlds, it is death that dies. That day is to him the birthday of eternity. Then only does he truly begin to live ; for he lives in union with Him who is the everlasting source of life.

Well did the great Apostle comfort himself and others with these words : — “ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” . Nor was he deceived — he is still alive ; so is Isaiah ; so are Abraham and Enoch. Yes ; and though thousands of years have rolled over them, they are still in the morning of eternity. This sun, these stars, are all vanishing sparks. Orion, and Arcturus with his sons, will grow pale under the believer’s eye. There will be no new dispensation in heaven ; there is no cave of Machpelah, no tomb-stones, there. The trees there are not Cypress, but the Tree of Life, and the river is the River of Life, that flows from the throne of God.

The perpetuity of future bliss is presented to us under the figure of an imperishable possession, — “ an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and

that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." To be rich is what most men intensely desire. Most vigorously do they prosecute their labors for that end; and, in the midst of perils, they go down to the sea in ships, penetrating the most pestilential regions, for the same object. Towards some, Plenty turns her horn. Yet the insecurity of wealth is proverbial. Who knows how long his property will be his own? Fire, flood, drought, the bankrupt, the burglar, are busy. And, if men escape these, for how long is the escape? We brought nothing into the world, and we can carry nothing out. It is a lease only that we hold, and that for no fixed period; the longest is but short; this day may end it. One possession alone is permanent. It lies where no thief approacheth, or moth corrupteth, and where is no more sea. It is not the gold of Ophir. Our onyx or sapphire is not found there. That inheritance is undefiled by fraud, cruelty, or avarice; it was purchased by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

The same truth is conveyed, also, by the figure of a permanent registration. Amongst us, it is no unusual thing for names to be wanting in lists of passengers and voters. Excommunication takes

place from the church, expulsion from school and college, and exclusion from other organizations. It is a custom in Sweden, when the male line of a family becomes extinct, publicly to break their escutcheon. It is not long since the Baron Peter de Walencrona died, at the age of ninety-five, and in him expired a title of nobility conferred by Charles the Twelfth. A herald therefore proceeded to the Church of the Nobles in Stockholm, and there publicly broke the armorial shield of the Baron, whose family name is no longer found on the list of Swedish nobility.

But when the Great Captain of our salvation grants a patent of nobility among his people, all of whom are made kings and priests unto God, he never withdraws it. "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Christ will forever delight in his society, and rejoice to honor him.

We meet, also, with the image of a continuing city. Here we have none, but we seek one to come. Abraham looked, and every believer looks, for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Human life is nomadic. To-day we pitch our tent here, to-morrow elsewhere. The

mightiest Babel towers are only preludes of dispersion. Man's cities will not stand. Nimrod founded the first ; it stood for centuries ; but a prophet cried, " Woe to the bloody city ! " — and it tumbled into ruins. Inquire for Babylon, the golden city, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency. Look for her hanging gardens, and her hundred gates. The wild beasts of the desert lie there ; owls dwell there, and satyrs dance there. Out of her ruins many a caravansera, many a village, ay, and distant city, have been constructed, and in turn fallen to the dust. They lacked continuance. For centuries desert winds have swept over Persepolis. Of Solomon's Tadmor, a forest of columns and a few tombs are all that remain. Tyre is now like the top of a rock ; and the ships of Tarshish have ceased to howl for her. " Troy was." An aqueduct is all that tells where Carthage stood. The Cities of Refuge no longer defend the manslayer. And those of the Achæan league, — where are they ? Egypt is one vast burial-place of cities. Near to Rome are traces of fifty centres of life, destroyed more than two thousand years ago. Rome herself hardly is. Nor is our own continent devoid of eloquent witnesses — as in Palenque and Uxmal — to the truth

that terrestrial cities do not continue. Let not the proud capitals of our own day mock at this history of the past. A change in the course of commerce or conquest, the action of elements upon them or of convulsions beneath them, may yet compel each to put on sackcloth. There certainly is one conflagration which none of them will survive.

The Jew thought that his beloved metropolis was never to be shaken. There was, apparently, reason for his partial judgment. It was God's chosen residence. And beautiful, indeed, "for situation, the joy of the whole earth, was Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the Great King." Yet has Jerusalem repeatedly experienced a signal overthrow. The Babylonians and Persians in turn subdued it. Romans, Saracens and Turks, laid it waste. From Sennacherib to the present Sultan, it has been trodden down by unbelieving Gentiles. The idolater has driven his ploughshare over the site of the temple, and Mount Zion is now crowned with a Mohammedan mosque.

Is it strange that the denizens of earth should long for a city which hath foundations? Welcome, then, the promise of a continuing city! "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved." Of what avail will it be for the Edomite to cry, Raze

it, raze it, even to the foundations? Walk about the heavenly Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; and then say, what weapon formed against her shall prosper? What engine of human or satanic malice will ever beat down those walls? What army, compassing the New Jerusalem, shall leave not one stone upon another? Ye who sigh over the desolations of terrestrial cities, say, who is the Alexander or Timour, the Omar or Saladin, that need be feared? Earthquakes are not recorded, eruptions are there unknown. Broken arches and columns, tottering walls and towers, never meet the eye. Thou Better Land! "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." The effulgence of eternal glory, the glory of the Lamb, beams upon it. The foundation, the walls, the gates, and the precious stones which adorn them, are all indestructible. Age after age may our love of place strengthen, without fear or apprehension

The perpetuity of future bliss is illustrated by the metaphor of an eternal habitation. It would be superfluous to repeat, in regard to dwellings, what has just been said in regard to cities. The picture would be more vivid, however, in the ratio that hamlets and isolated dwellings are more numerous than cities. Who has not read of the wrecks made by the avalanche? Who has not seen many a family made houseless by the merciless flames? Who has not felt as if his own being were invaded in the decay or destruction of his paternal roof? The rain descends, the winds blow and beat upon men's houses, and they fall. When the modern Jew builds a house, he is obliged by the rabbis to leave some part of it incomplete, that he may more constantly remember the present condition of Jerusalem and the temple. A square cubit, at least, of the wall must he leave free from lime, and write upon it some Hebrew inscription, and usually the words which signify "A memorial of desolation." And where is the Gentile house that contains not such a memorial? We live in tabernacles. Our graves are far the most permanent of our dwellings. Pyramids outlast palaces. Well, then, may we, who are in tabernacles, groan,

being burdened; “not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” We know who it is that has gone to prepare a place for us. We know on what rock our heavenly mansion is founded.

The same fact is brought to view by a permanence of actual residence. “Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.” The most that we can expect here is, now and then, a short repose. The most we see of each other is just to bid good-morning, and then pass along. The most that many talk about is past separations, and those to come. “Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.” Scarcely has the aspirant for some public office secured it before his successor bows him to the door. Scarcely has the mansion been completed, and the occupant begun to say unto his soul, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry, before he hears Death knocking at the door. At our religious services, public and social, there are a few songs of Zion, a few petitions, a word of exhortation, and then we go out. But “Him that

overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." He shall go no more out into the rude storms which have beat upon him. He shall go no more out as a stranger and pilgrim. Not a caravansera, but an eternal dwelling-place, does he enter. That immortality shall never put on mortality. He shall go no more out of hearing of joyful hallelujahs; nor out of the presence of patriarchs and prophets, of cherubim and seraphim — most of all, out of the presence of the Lamb; for he shall be ever with the Lord.

What a contrast to earth! What sadness does this world witness as, day by day, affection sobs forth its farewell! From the garden of Eden our first parents went out. From the land of his nativity Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went. When our Lord and his disciples had sung an hymn, they went out. The scene at Miletus was no unusual one. Not without a struggle does the missionary see his native hills sink in the horizon. Do not the parting tears of the bridal day usually mar its gladness? It is the charm of comparatively uninterrupted domestic happiness that makes so many cry out, in later years, Give me

back my youth ! Of unnumbered households is it true,

They grew in beauty, side by side,
They filled one home with glee—
Their graves are severed far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.

Yes, parted thus they rest, who played
Beneath the same green tree ;
Whose voices mingled as they prayed
Around one parent knee."

The minor key in man's breast is the prevailing one here ; then, what comfort is there in that assurance, "He shall go no more out !" We shall then be ever with the Lord. We have seasons of fellowship with him here ; times when he comes into the midst of us, with his gracious "Peace be unto you ;" favored walks with him, when our hearts burn within us by the way. But in the city of God we shall be ever with him. Often is the cry heard, "O, that it were with me as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me ; when by his light I walked through darkness ;—as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle ; when the Almighty was yet with me." "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not

where they have laid him." "O, that I knew where I might find him!" But in glory there are no such laments. All tears on account of his absence are wiped away forever. "In thy presence, O Lord, is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Heaven is not a harbor into which we put in distress, to refit for the remainder of the voyage. "There shall be no more sea." The bosom of Jesus is the home of the soul,—a home as lasting and changeless as eternity.

The conception of eternal duration is by no means easy. As our thoughts and feelings follow one another in a constant flow, the consciousness of this awakens the idea of succession. Thence naturally arises the idea of duration, which expands till we conceive of duration without end. Any regular movement, like that of hands on the dial-plate, or the earth in its orbit, serves as a measure of duration, and measured duration we call time. Looking backward or forward, we find that our arithmetic fails to find a termination, and hence we speak of an eternity past and an eternity to come. Time,—the life-time of an individual, or the life-time of our globe,—is only an isthmus between these boundless oceans. Along this narrow shore our race for

a while pitch their tents. He, alone, who inhabiteth eternity, can survey the whole. Yet, it is well for us to ascend our little light-house, and look off toward the eternity to come. With our backs, then, upon the past, let us strive to penetrate this night of time as far as possible.

Starting with an annual revolution of the earth as unity, we wheel round the sun till we have measured off the allotted age of man. We continue our revolutions till we have travelled as long as did the oldest man who ever lived: "And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years—and he died;" call it a thousand years—but he died. Since then he has been living in eternity; yes, our first parents are now in the world of spirits, more fully conscious where and what they are than we ourselves. They are now about six thousand years old. We take this period as unity, and, for convenience, will just add four thousand, making it ten thousand years. The period is coming when we shall be as old as the progenitors of our race now are; yes, ten thousand years old. Ten thousand years with the Lord! We dwell a moment upon that, till the term is distinctly before the mind; and then multiply by ten, and we send our thoughts rapidly forward one hundred thousand

years. One hundred thousand years with the Lord! As we attempt to grasp the idea of a life of such length it grows dim and shadowy. O, how venerable the saint of such an age! But that being the merest commencement of eternity, we must make it a starting-point for something beyond. Let us here borrow a familiar device. Imagine a bird to come and remove one grain from Mount St. Elias, and, after one hundred thousand years, to come and remove another, and thus continue till the whole mountain is made level with the plain. Let that Phoenix repeat her visits, at the same intervals, till the whole rocky barrier which lines our western coast has been borne away; yea, till the entire globe itself, one grain in each hundred thousand years, has been transported to another planet. During that period we dwell with the Lord.

Try an experiment of a more tangible character; fathom the ocean. Let every inch of line represent a century; every fathom will then measure off a period longer than from the creation to the present hour. Now, heave the lead. Down it goes, fathom after fathom, and still it runs. Pay out the line, it still sinks. We reach the end of our cord, twenty-seven thousand six hundred feet,—more than thirty millions of years,—but we have not

reached the bottom, — not reached the limit of our fellowship with Jesus. O, fathomless ocean of bliss ! But these illustrations end in dimness, leaving only a confused impression of indefinite duration.

If these confuse instead of aiding conception, something may be demanded that shall take us more rapidly along the path of immortal life. Then discharge a cannon-ball, and follow it, as it flies night and day, till, after eleven years, it reaches the sun. Let each second of this flight be a century of our time, and before reaching the mark we get well on into billions of years. What would the period be when we reach a fixed star ?

But this transcends all possible distinctness of conception. Then let a more sober, though sufficiently wild, calculation of the Hindoos come to our aid. Their sacred books speak of great ages, consisting of four hundred and thirty-two thousand years. A thousand of those great ages, or four hundred and thirty-two million years, make one day of Brahma. Let such be our days, each with a morning and evening twilight of a thousand years ; go on thus counting the years that you shall be with the Lord.

But, after all our efforts, we are baffled. The eternity of that bliss remains, and will to creatures

forever remain, unmeasured and immeasurable. These attempts were not suggested in the hope of success, but only that a glimpse might be obtained of the vastness of everlasting co-residence with Christ. Angels, with all their gigantic powers, and profoundly as they are versed in the algebra of heaven, are foiled as well as we. There is one accessory idea that may be more easily grasped; no lapse of duration diminishes the term of our being with the Lord. The sons of God, who shouted for joy on the morning of creation, are no nearer the end of eternity now than they were then, and when we shall have reached the remotest point in the future which we have been able to conceive of, we shall be no nearer the end of our eternity of bliss than at this moment, for no such end exists to be approached. It is an interminable duration of glory. Millions of ages will not lessen it an hour, for it runs on and on forever and ever, being equally and always everlasting. Eternity alone cannot be wasted.

Such is the duration of future blessedness. Away, then, ye heirs to the unfading crown, away with all frivolities! Awake to loftier aspirations, to nobler aims. Be ashamed to drivel. Set yourselves forward a few thousand years. From five or ten

hundred centuries of dwelling with the Lord, look back upon your little heap of earthly gold — upon the honors and flatteries of this life — upon the assembly-room, the opera, and like amusements. Can you anticipate the contempt of heaven? Live, then, not as a mortal, but an immortal being.

Give to eternity, as well as time, a tongue, and let it speak. Let it tell you the worth of present vanities. Let its solemn tones break in upon your ambitious schemes, — upon your luxuries, your earthly toil and discontent. “Forever, forever, forever!” exclaimed a holy man of former years, in the midst of a repast. Friends could not quiet him; he had been pondering upon heaven, and was so swallowed up with the thoughts of eternity that he could not but cry, “Forever, forever, forever!”

Grasp not at bubbles; chase not shadows. Let not the pitiful honors and treasures of a world soon to be burnt up, arrest you on the path to glory. Believe and live for eternity. We are borderers upon eternity; we live on the marches between two worlds. The present is only the dim dawn of our being. Can we longer live so insensible to our destiny? — to the eternal verities? “Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.” O,

philosophy for the brutes! Go, stamp the image of a swine on your gold—grave scorpions on emerald and topaz—but do not so degrade your deathless soul by the grovelling impress of earth.

“I paint for eternity,” said Zeuxis, when asked why he took such unwearied pains with his performance. Live, O man, woman, live for eternity! Live in the sobriety and elevation of our hope to be forever with the Lord.

“Forever with the Lord!

Amen, so let it be!

Life from the dead is in that word,

’T is immortality.

Here in the body pent,

Absent from him I roam;

Yet nightly pitch my moving tent

A day’s march nearer home.

Forever with the Lord!

Father, if ’t is thy will,

The promise of that faithful word

E’en here to me fulfil.

So when my latest breath

Shall rend the vail in twain,

By death I shall escape from death,

And life eternal gain.

Knowing as I am known,
How shall I love that word,
And oft repeat before the throne,
Forever with the Lord ! ”

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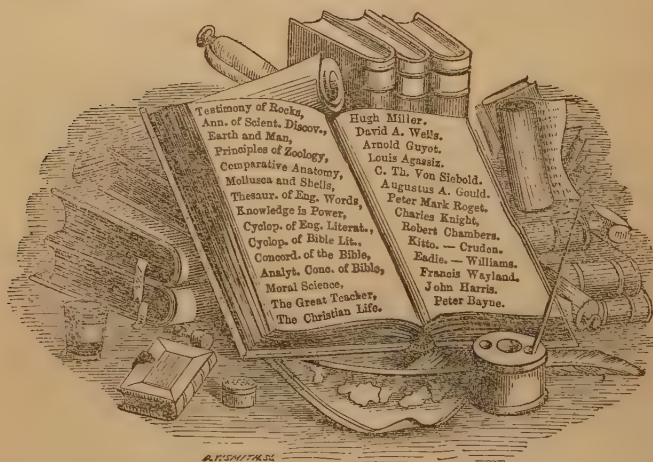
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